United Nations

S/PV.7857

Security Council

Seventy-second year

Provisional

7857th meeting

Tuesday, 10 January 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Wallström/Mr. Skoog/Mr. Thöresson	(Sweden)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Solíz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Gebeyehu
	France	Mr. Fekl
	Italy	Mr. Alfano
	Japan	Mr. Kishi
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Abdrakhmanov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Ukraine	Mr. Kyslytsya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Alan Duncan
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Conflict prevention and sustaining peace

Letter dated 4 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/6)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Conflict prevention and sustaining peace

Letter dated 4 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2017/6)

The President: I wish to warmly welcome the Secretary-General, ministers and other distinguished representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

On behalf of the members of the Security Council, I should like to welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, who is taking part in a formal meeting of the Council for the first time in his new capacity. In the short time since he has taken up his post, the Secretary-General has made an active effort to informally engage with the Council's members — a much appreciated gesture. Let me express the hope that the Council will continue to build the closest and most productive cooperation possible with the new Secretary-General in carrying out its primary responsibility of strengthening international peace, security and stability. We should support the Secretary-General's already expressed intention to pursue a surge of diplomacy for peace. An open and mutually reinforcing relationship between the Secretary-General and the Council, based on trust and mutual respect, can form a foundation for this effort.

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, and where conflict and insecurity continue to undermine the lives of millions, we must recognize that no one can resolve the problems we face when acting alone. Working together, though sometimes difficult, we may just have a chance to rescue the future for who are at present without hope.

I should like to take this opportunity to express gratitude and pay tribute to Mr. Ban Ki Moon, who carried out his duties as Secretary-General over the course of many years in a dignified manner.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Morocco, Namibia, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Slovakia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Viet Nam to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and Ms. Alison August Treppel, Executive Secretary of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/6, which contains a letter dated 4 January 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: May I first thank you, Madam, and the Swedish presidency for convening this meeting and allowing me to have my first formal presence in the Security Council, discussing what I believe must be the priority of everything we do together — preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. I believe that the massive attendance at this meeting proves that, indeed, this message is something that we all fully recognize.

The United Nations was established to prevent war by binding us in a rules-based international order. Today, that order is under grave threat. Millions of people in crisis look to the Council to preserve global stability and to protect them from harm, but the enormous human and economic cost of conflicts around the world shows how complex and challenging this is. Yet we spend far more time and resources responding to crises rather than preventing them. People are paying too high a price. The Member States are paying too high a price. We need a whole new approach.

It has proved very difficult to persuade decision-makers at the national and international levels that prevention must be their priority — perhaps because successful prevention does not attract attention. The television cameras are not there when a crisis is avoided. Most of today's conflicts are still essentially internal, even if they quickly take on regional and transnational overtones. They are fuelled by competition for power and resources, inequality, marginalization and exclusion, poor governance, weak institutions and sectarian divides. They are exacerbated by climate change, population growth and the globalization of crime and terrorism. With so many factors at work, it takes very little to trigger a crisis that can engulf a country or a region, with global consequences.

But while the causes of crisis are deeply interlinked, the United Nations response remains fragmented. The interconnected nature of today's crises requires us to connect our own efforts for peace and security, sustainable development and human rights not just in words but in practice. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on sustaining peace demonstrate strong intergovernmental support for an integrated approach. The challenge now is to make corresponding changes to our culture, strategy, structures and operations.

We must rebalance our approach to peace and security. For decades, this has been dominated by responding to conflict. For the future, we need to do far more to prevent war and sustain peace. The reforms I am setting in motion aim to achieve this. I have started with the decision-making processes in the Secretariat. The newly established Executive Committee will increase our capacity to integrate all pillars of the United Nations under a common vision for action.

I have appointed a senior adviser on policy, whose main task will be to map the prevention capacities of the United Nations system and to bring them together into an integrated platform for early detection and action. This work will enable us to link the reform of our peace and security architecture with the reform of the United Nations development system, while respecting the specific areas of competence of the Security Council and the General Assembly. We need the support of both organs for our efforts to build and sustain peace across the continuum, from prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping to peacebuilding and long-term development.

The primary work of conflict prevention lies with Member States.

(*spoke in French*)

The United Nations system as a whole must stand ready to assist Governments in implementing Agenda 2030, strengthening governance and institutions, and promoting the rule of law and all human rights: civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The Human Rights Up Front initiative, which also seeks to integrate the issues of peace and security, human rights and sustainable development, will allow us continue to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations in this field.

Humanitarian agencies and development actors need to work together to help States prevent crises and strengthen the resilience of their societies. The current fragmented system does not give us the capacity to address the root causes of conflict.

It is essential to ensure that women and girls participate fully in building inclusive and resilient societies. Where gender equality permeates the social fabric and women and men face difficulties as equal partners, societies have a much better chance of achieving stability and preserving human dignity and prosperity.

It is also crucial to resolve the global scourge of youth unemployment, not only to ensure their development but also to prevent instability and social conflicts and to reduce violent extremism. Combating youth unemployment should not just be an absolute priority in national development policies, but also a priority in international cooperation.

(*spoke in English*)

As societies become multi-ethnic, multireligious and multicultural, we will need greater political, cultural and economic investments in inclusivity and cohesion, so that people appreciate the benefits of diversity rather than perceiving it as a threat. All groups need to see that their individual identities are respected, while feeling that they belong as valued members of the community as a whole. Civil society has a role to play in raising the alarm when such respect is threatened or lost.

We must commit to a surge in diplomacy for peace, in partnership with regional organizations, while mobilizing the entire range of those with influence, from religious authorities to civil society and the business community. We will launch an initiative to enhance our mediation capacity, both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field, and to support regional and national mediation efforts. I ask the Security Council to make greater use of the options laid out in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. I am prepared to support the Council through the use of my good offices and through my personal engagement.

Too many prevention opportunities have been lost because Member States mistrusted each other's motives, and because of concerns over national sovereignty. Such concerns are understandable, in a world where power is unequal and principles have sometimes been applied selectively. Indeed, prevention should never be used to serve other political goals. On the contrary, prevention is best served by strong sovereign States, acting for the good of their people.

In taking preventive action, we need to avoid double standards. But that does not mean there are no standards at all. Preventive action is essential to avert mass atrocities and grave abuses of human rights. And we can achieve that only through reasoned discussion, based on facts and the pursuit of truth. Prevention must consistently be seen as a value in itself. It is an essential means of reducing human suffering and enabling people to reach their full potential.

International cooperation for prevention, in particular translating early warning into early action, depends upon trust between Member States and in their relations with the United Nations. I stand ready to foster a more trusting relationship and to improve communications with the Council, with consistency, candour and transparency. Disagreements about the past cannot be allowed to prevent us from acting today. Together, we need to demonstrate leadership and strengthen the credibility and authority of the United Nations by putting peace first. Ending the boundless human suffering and the wanton waste of resources generated by conflict is in everyone's interests. The Council, working with the Peacebuilding Commission, all other parts of the United Nations system and regional organizations, can enable faster preventive action when the warning signs are there. The cost of inaction is simply too high.

War is never inevitable. It is always a matter of choice: the choice to exclude, to discriminate, to marginalize and to resort to violence. By restoring trust between Governments and their citizens and among Member States, we can prevent and avoid conflict. But peace, too, is never inevitable. It is the result of difficult decisions, hard work and compromise. We should never take it for granted, but should prize and nurture it in every country, at every time. Prevention is not merely a priority, but the priority. If we live up to our responsibilities, we will save lives, reduce suffering and give hope to millions.

Allow me to repeat the appeal I made 10 days ago in my first message as Secretary-General: Let us make this year, 2017, a year for peace. I think it would be naive to say that 2017 will be a year of peace, but at least it is our obligation to do everything we can to make it a year for peace.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

I thank the Secretary-General very much for reminding us of the achievements of the United Nations over the past 70 years, and for laying out his vision of a United Nations equipped to respond to the conflicts and instability that today affect the lives of millions. A close and proactive working relationship between the Secretary-General and the Security Council is the cornerstone of the Organization's ability to deliver lasting peace and security. We look forward to forging a strong and trusting relationship with the Secretary-General, not least to improve the United Nations capacity to take early action to prevent violent conflict.

We have discussed conflict prevention many times before in the Chamber — and I am sure many around the table will make that point — but progress has been meagre. I would like to say some words about how that needs to change.

The year 2016 exposed the urgent need for a global recommitment to multilateral solutions to conflict and to collaborative security, specifically to the prevention of conflict. The horror in Syria and Yemen, and situations such as the instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, dominate the Council's work. Can we afford an ever-growing list of crises slipping into violent conflict and needless human misery?

The United Nations humanitarian and peacekeeping instruments have come under immense pressure, with $22.2 billion in humanitarian appeals and over 100,000 United Nations peacekeepers. Meanwhile, research shows that measures to peacefully prevent conflict cost, on average, just a tenth of post-conflict recovery efforts. Investing in prevention is not only morally right; it is the smart, economically sound and sustainable thing to do.

Prevention requires addressing the root causes of conflict and instability before they reach the front pages or the Council's agenda. It calls for inclusive nationally led processes that build strong institutions and that are supported by a whole-of-organization commitment. The sustaining peace agenda, together with the Sustainable Development Goals, provides the platform and the master plan.

At the same time, Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations — on pacific settlement of disputes — requires the parties to a dispute to seek solutions through peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation or judicial settlement. We have the tools. What we need now is a new political consensus in support of prevention. Let me highlight some areas for priority actions that can underpin it.

The first, as the Secretary-General has said, is to make prevention a priority for the whole United Nations system: hold each entity accountable for its part in contributing and ensure that the United works closely with other international, regional and subregional actors. A good example is the current joint efforts with regard to the Gambia by the Economic Community of West African States and the United Nations Regional Office for West Africa and the Sahel.

The second is to improve the capacity of the United Nations to recognize and address the root causes and drivers of conflict by working together across the United Nations system's pillars, mandates and agencies. In that regard, we are encouraged by the steps that the Secretary-General has already taken to make the Secretariat work more efficiently.

The third is to improve system-wide analysis and welcome independent advice from the Secretary-General, including on new and emerging threats and risks, such as climate change, to improve our collective strategic planning and response. We would like the Secretary-General to tell us what we need to know, not only what we want to hear.

The fourth is that we need to harness the agency of women to create sustainable peace through inclusive processes. Experiences shared through a network of female peace mediators, which I have also initiated, confirm the importance of inclusiveness.

Finally, we need to recognize that, in the words of the Secretary-General, there can be no humanitarian solution for a political crisis. Humanitarian action can never be a substitute for political dialogue and mediation.

We should heed the Secretary-General's call for a surge in diplomacy for peace. In order to do so, Sweden commits to contributing to a Security Council that empowers the Secretary-General to take timely, decisive and effective action to resolve disputes and prevent conflicts before they begin. I hope that other Council members can join us in adopting that approach. We will do our utmost to create an atmosphere of open, respectful and honest dialogue around the Council table.

We have heard the Secretary-General's call for effective conflict prevention. We know that for him to be effective, he needs the political support of Member States. Let us resolve to put peace first.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Security Council.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Abdrakhmanov (Kazakhstan): Please accept, Madam, President, my most sincere wishes of success for Sweden's presidency. It is deeply symbolic that the year 2017 starts with a renewed focus on prevention, jointly facilitated by Sweden — a nation with an impeccable record of promoting the values of the

United Nations — and the new Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres, a trusted leader and a symbol of the Organization's ideals. May I remind the Council that the first-ever United Nations office on prevention was established in my region, Central Asia, 10 years ago. Now it is time for the rest of the Organization to follow suit.

Clearly, the prevention of conflicts requires a complex approach that, in fact, requires a paradigm shift. Being seized with addressing the crises of the day might be a good excuse to avoid adopting audacious visions and taking bold steps. Global economic uncertainty, political disagreements and narrowly formulated national priorities might prevent us from fostering dialogue and trust in international relations. Still, the United Nations has a duty to ensure a safe and prosperous future for all, and fulfilling it requires practical steps to build a world free of the virus of war and conflict.

In March last year, my President, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, published the manifesto entitled "The World. The 21st Century", a far-reaching document combining a realistic take on the world with an ambitious vision based on unity rather than on division, and on cooperation rather than on rivalry. On 1 January, on the first day of Kazakhstan's tenure in the Security Council, President Nazarbayev unveiled his policy address on sustaining a global partnership for a secure, just and prosperous world, copies of which are available in the Chamber. Dwelling on the principles of the manifesto, the policy address puts forward seven points related to making Kazakhstan's contribution to the work of the Council as meaningful and constructive as possible.

In the context of today's agenda, the President's address makes it clear that, without genuine dialogue, preventing conflicts and sustaining peace are unattainable. At the global level, it requires setting a goal of building by 2045, the United Nations centenary, a world free of nuclear weapons. Such a very practical decision will send a message that political leaders — and the nations they represent — are strong enough to destroy invisible walls and build bridges for the common good. The policy address emphasizes the need to do much more at the regional level. In line with our commitment to strengthen peace and security in Central Asia and Afghanistan, we will endeavour to develop a regional model of peace and cooperation, taking special care to address the root causes of the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the prevention of the proliferation of terrorism and violent extremism.

Rivalries, lack of trust and unity of purpose, injustice, as well as stark economic and social inequalities and underdevelopment, prevent the global community from achieving progress in the Middle East. As a nation committed to dialogue and mediation, we are ready to host talks in Astana to help pave the way for restoring peace in Syria. We also believe that dialogue between political leaders and religious authorities, as the Secretary-General has mentioned, should be intensified with a view to finding lasting political solutions to eradicate the threat of terrorism. We invite all Member States to jointly draft an Astana code of conduct for international counter-terrorism operations as a step towards the creation of a global anti-terrorist coalition or network. The adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as soon as possible will undoubtedly be a major prevention measure.

We endorse the Secretary-General's remarks on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a key prevention tool. My President's policy address emphasizes the role of the security-development nexus in preventing wars, protecting human rights and building a safer and prosperous future. The SDGs are a direct and significant contribution to the 2045 Vision. Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, will host EXPO-2017 this summer, and we hope that that event, along with obvious benefits such as greater international cooperation in the area of sustainable energy, will produce added value in the form of stronger collective commitment to security through development.

During Kazakhstan's tenure in the Security Council, we will support efforts to make the Council and the entire United Nations better equipped for the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. To enhance the level of trust between States and generate the political will required, the President of Kazakhstan proposed to convene Council meetings at the level of Heads of State and Government on a regular basis. We believe that this is a timely and highly relevant initiative to achieve a paradigm shift in the Council.

As far as the United Nations machinery is concerned, we welcome the recommendations of the United Nations-commissioned reports on peace operations (see S/2015/446) and the peacebuilding architecture (see S/2015/490). A systemic approach should be further developed to identify and prevent emerging crises, take into account new factors, such as cybercrime and the deployment of weapons in outer space, and pay foremost attention to development and human rights.

We strongly believe that the Security Council should have a direct oversight role in the peace continuum, including through greater cooperation with the Secretary-General. Regular joint consultations, both formal and informal, between the Security Council and the Secretary-General continue to create important opportunities for cooperation, prevention, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development.

I conclude by voicing my support once more for the vision of Secretary-General António Guterres. As the honest broker, bridge-builder and messenger of peace, he should play the crucial role in conflict prevention at the earliest stages, by bringing to the attention of the Security Council any matter that, in his opinion, may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations is very clear on that point.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.

Mr. Alfano (Italy): Allow me to commend the Swedish presidency for organizing today's debate. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General for his ambitious programme of action. As we begin the year, I look forward to an open, productive and fruitful working relationship in the Security Council.

This is Italy's first open debate since its election to the Council. We are sharing our mandate with our Dutch partners in the best spirit of European unity and solidarity. As a Mediterranean country, Italy brings to the Council its natural disposition to build bridges to draw together all sides.

We believe that inclusiveness is key to effective multilateralism and to addressing our common challenges. In Libya and Iraq, we must work together and spare no effort to achieve reconciliation and support for legitimate institutions. In Syria, we need a greater investment in inclusive dialogue among all the parties. Italy also attaches great importance to the successful outcome of the Cyprus settlement talks. I commend the brilliant efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard. In addition, let us not forget tensions in Africa, such as those seen today in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Unquestionably, if we truly want peace, conflict prevention and diplomacy must prevail over military solutions. We must preserve the primacy of political will over the misery of military might. The principles and the framework to achieve this shift already exist; we do not need to reinvent them. Allow me, however, to recall a few of these principles.

Conflict prevention and the primacy of political solutions are at the heart of two crucial United Nations reviews — one on the peacekeeping and peacebuilding architecture, the other on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The sustaining peace agenda stresses the need for a holistic approach covering the pillars of security, human rights and development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also places great emphasis on the strong link between peace and development. What is now needed more than ever is a common effort to move from vision to action. I therefore want to stress three important objectives for our collective efforts, taking full advantage of the Secretary-General's peace agenda.

Our first objective should be comprehensive reform that adapts the United Nations peace system to the new global challenges. Such reform requires an integrated approach to peace and the development of a United Nations machinery that is fit for the new purpose, which might entail a revision of the Secretariat structure or a new distribution of roles and responsibilities. The Secretary-General should not hesitate in his functions to bring emerging crises to the Council's attention before they escalate. Reform must also address strengthening local ownership and partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, such as the European Union and the African Union.

Secondly, we need to encourage the effective use of early-warning indicators of violence, radicalization, extremism and assaults on human rights, religion and culture. Terrorism attacks our fundamental values and spreads fear. We must not be fearful because people in fear are not free. Fighting terror and fear means fighting for our freedom.

Thirdly, we must be focused on the root causes of instability. I will offer just a few examples as an input to the debate. Climate change is a growing root cause of conflict. We have made progress in shaping a global response, in Paris and in Marrakech, but it is now time to deliver. Ending hunger and achieving food security is another critical area, especially owing to its connection to disruptive South-South and South-North migrations. Large movements of people can be both an outcome and a root cause of conflict. However, if well managed, they can become an opportunity for peace, growth and development. These issues, along with many others, also appear in the programme of the Italian presidency of the Group of Seven.

In conclusion, we are determined to build peace for tomorrow. That is not just the motto of our year in the Security Council; it also describes the resolve that will drive our actions. We will work to build consensus together with the Secretary-General, our partners in the Council and the broader membership.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia.

Mr. Gebeyehu (Ethiopia): Let me congratulate Mr. António Guterres on his assumption of his duties as the new Secretary-General. I would also like to express appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts in leading the Organization over the past decade. Mr. Ban will always be remembered for his important contribution, inter alia, in facilitating the adoption of the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement. Both are indeed critical for conflict prevention and sustaining peace, which are objectives that our new Secretary-General has made major priorities.

Madame President, we wish to congratulate you on the major initiative you have taken and endorse your proposal on the role of the Secretary-General.

The timing of today's high-level open debate cannot be more appropriate in the light of the unprecedented challenges facing the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The credibility of the Organization, and particularly the Security Council, is undoubtedly on the line because it has not risen to the occasion to effectively and decisively respond to those challenges. It is at this critical juncture that Secretary-General Guterres is taking office, and his leadership role will be absolutely imperative in bringing new impetus to the search for solutions to the many conflict and crisis situations around the world today.

The fact that he was appointed not only through a process more transparent than those of the past but also with the unanimous support of the Security Council and the General Assembly, must make it possible for him to proceed in carrying out his heavy responsibilities with confidence. We are hopeful that, with his wisdom and rich experience in leadership, both in his own country and at the United Nations for much of the past decade, he will be able to effectively guide the work of the Organization.

However, we know full well that he can only deliver the vision that he has laid out if he has the full support and cooperation of all Member States. This is all the more extremely critical at a time when the United Nations is indeed needed more than at any time in the past. It has never been clearer that the United Nations, as the only universal organization we have, has the indispensable role of addressing the many global challenges of our time, including in the area of peace and security.

That is why I would like to take this opportunity to pledge Ethiopia's unwavering support and cooperation to the Secretary-General in the effective discharge of his heavy responsibilities. Ethiopia has indeed been playing active role in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. In this regard, we are ready to work with the Secretary-General as he embarks on his agenda for peace with a view to addressing some of the difficult conflict and crisis situations bedevilling our continent.

In view of the enormous peace and security challenges we are facing today, conflict prevention must be given high priority. The concept of sustaining peace is also perfectly aligned with this important priority, having brought a paradigm shift in the manner in which we deal with peace and security issues. The three major reviews on peace and security together with the concurrent resolutions 2282 (2016) and 70/262, adopted last year by the Council and the General Assembly, respectively, have indeed placed prevention and sustaining peace at the core of the United Nations activities in the area of peace and security.

It is encouraging to note that Mr. António Guterres has made what he has called "diplomacy for peace" his top priority, and we believe this is perfectly in line with the conflict-prevention and sustaining peace agenda. His firm and independent leadership on that matter, based on the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, will certainly go a long way towards restoring the standing and credibility of the Organization.

In that regard, the Secretary-General's active engagement in preventive diplomacy, mediation and peaceful resolution of disputes through the judicious exercise of his good offices will be critical to addressing some of the most difficult conflict situations. Undoubtedly, his efforts need to be supported by putting to use all available tools, including early warning instruments and the application of rigorous analyses to emerging crisis situations, which will help him draw the attention of the Security Council, in line with Articles 33 and 99 of the Charter of the United Nations.

No matter what the Secretary-General may try to do, his efforts will be in vain without the full backing of the Security Council. That is why the need to enhance the working relations between the Security Council and the Secretary-General cannot be overemphasized. It is self-evident that there is room for a lot of improvement and we need to continue to be innovative if we are to achieve the desired objective.

Addressing institutional fragmentation and ensure coherence across the entire United Nations system is also absolutely essential to ensuring that conflict prevention and sustaining peace are placed at the heart of the Organization's work and activities. In that regard, we are encouraged by the Secretary-General's strong commitment to pushing for the implementation of the key recommendations of the three major reviews on peace and security with a view to creating a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture.

The United Nations cannot address the myriad international peace and security challenges alone, which underlines the need to enhance strategic partnerships with regional and subregional organizations across the whole spectrum of conflict cycles, including prevention, peacekeeping and special political missions, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. In that regard, we appreciate the strong commitment expressed by the Secretary-General to the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. We sincerely hope that he will contribute to its further enhancement, building on the important momentum generated by his predecessor. In that context, we also look forward to his forthcoming visit to Addis Ababa towards the end of this month to attend the twenty-eighth African Union Summit.

Finally, we have no illusion that the coming period will be smooth sailing for the Secretary-General. There are no easy solutions to the complex peace and security challenges of our time. However, we believe that he not only has the right vision and strong leadership qualities, but also the wisdom and experience to navigate this difficult period and deliver results. Those qualities have been exhibited today as well. I wish to conclude my remarks by wishing him every success.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States of America and Member of President Obama's Cabinet.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank you, Madam President, for taking up this important cause, as you have done throughout your career. Let me also take this occasion to welcome our new members: Sweden, Italy, Bolivia, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan. We look forward to working with each of them.

I welcome Secretary-General Guterres for his first briefing to the Security Council. We knew he would hit the ground running, but I am not sure that we knew that he would be doing so at an Olympic pace, so we congratulate him on his energy and the ambitious vision that he has brought to the cause of conflict prevention, conflict response and, as he put it, the cause of sustaining peace. I think that it is really important that he has wasted no time reforming the capacity of the United Nation to be more nimble in the face of the crises that confront us.

This debate is also timely for me personally, as it will be one of the last times that I have the honour of representing the United States in the Chamber. For the past eight years since he took office, President Barack Obama has been committed to showing United States leadership here at the United Nations. The United Nations matters as the only global institution dedicated to finding solutions to transnational threats and challenges that all of us face. The Security Council remains at the forefront.

The Council matters because 100,000 troops and police are deployed worldwide on the basis of our resolutions and our words. The Council matters because we make international law, we set standards, we authorize the use of force, we enable the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid, and we impose financial sanctions and arms embargoes to address threats to international peace and security. We help set the rules for how States should behave. The Council matters because when we come together, as others have noted, we can respond to crises in ways no other institutions can.

But let us compare those capabilities with the reality of the world around us — the reality of suffering in places like Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, Libya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Nigeria and Mali. It is obvious that we, as the Council, can do better. The question becomes this: When we have the tools, the authority and such a strong partner in the Secretary-General, what is holding us back? Why are we not delivering more? I want to make four points to explain how we, as members of the Security Council, can show leadership to narrow the gap between what this institution can achieve and where it has fallen short, particularly as it relates to prevention.

First, if we are serious about preventing conflict, the important principle of State sovereignty cannot be a straitjacket to keep the Security Council and the Secretary-General from taking necessary action to respond to urgent, life-threatening crises. No Member of the United Nations would suggest that we dispense with respect for State sovereignty or that it is not an essential bedrock of the international order. It is. The United States aspires to a world of States that, as the Charter of the United Nations States, should "live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

Countries must respect one another. It is a very simple proposition. But sovereignty cannot be a shield to prevent outside scrutiny over actions taken in defiance of the principles in the Charter of the United Nations. We have seen too many countries invoking State sovereignty as a means of securing full impunity for themselves — impunity to do what they want to their own people, in defiance of the Charter, and impunity to do what they want to do, ironically, to their neighbours, in defiance of the Charter. In 2014, Russia violated the sovereignty of another State Member of the United Nations and current member of the Security Council, Ukraine, by invading and then attempting to annex Crimea, which Russia holds to this day. Yet Russia has suggested in the Chamber — and probably will again today — that failure to respect State sovereignty is the main driver of conflict, even as Russia has used its veto to insulate itself from consequences in the Council for trampling on Ukraine's sovereignty.

The perversion of sovereignty undermines our work in less obvious ways. Let us take peacekeeping. We generally authorize peacekeepers only when members of the Council see an imminent risk of mass violence — too often, as has been noted, after attacks have started. We are supposed to deploy Blue Helmets to help people, but in some cases Council members have suggested that peacekeepers should not do anything without checking first with the Governments that are responsible for harming their citizens, thereby warranting the deployment of peacekeepers in the first place.

In South Sudan, the Council authorized the urgent deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) for the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) last August to help restore security in the capital. The Government accepted the force. Five months later, not a single RPF soldier has been deployed, even as Government forces have continued killing civilians, used sexual violence as a systematic weapon of war, and positioned themselves to carry out large-scale mass atrocities. And the Government routinely blocks UNMISS patrols, to a point where UNMISS had to ask its permission to evacuate Chinese peacekeepers — permission that was not forthcoming, although the soldiers' lives hung in the balance. That was sovereignty of a perverse kind being exercised when one of our own peacekeepers was in grave jeopardy. Yet there has been no further action by the Council showing South Sudan's leaders that such obstruction has consequences.

I would like to anticipate the rebuttal to what I am saying. Some will accuse the United States of also invoking sovereignty when it is convenient. And in the past, the United States has on occasion taken actions that contradicted the principle that people should be able to choose their own path. As President Obama made clear when he took office, the United States strives to lead by example. Sometimes we still fall short of what we could achieve through deeper multilateral cooperation. Indeed, we have a long-standing debate in our Congress about international human rights treaties, in which some argue that sovereignty precludes ratifying treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, even when United States law already enshrines the treaty's standards. We strongly believe that we are better off — and better — when we strengthen the rule-based international order, and that means living by the norms that protect all of our common security and common humanity.

Secondly, if we are to sustain peace we first have to tell things as they are. We as diplomats have developed a lexicon of bureaucratic jargon that allows us to sidestep the issues that we are supposed to be tackling. Our statements in the Council fill up with empty phrases at the moments that demand the greatest precision and clarity. The result is that we often leave Security Council meetings without even knowing what each of us stands for. I recall all the times that our statements in the Council have used the passive voice. We say that dialogue must be pursued, violence must be ended, a ceasefire must be respected. How? By whom? Who has to do what? Let us be precise. We convene emergency meetings of the Council to discuss attacks by one party on another, but instead of doing the obvious — telling that party to stop — we dodge. We use the phrase "all parties" when we actually mean "one party". We resort to lines such as "There is no military solution", rather than identifying the actors who are pursuing a military solution.

Of course, words alone are not enough to stop suffering on the ground, but identifying who is responsible for abuses and violations of the Charter of the United Nations, in public, in the Council, is at least a modest form of accountability and an antidote to impunity. It may have some deterrent effect. It at least puts those responsible for violence on notice that we are watching. Now, I acknowledge that naming names can be harder for some countries than it is for a permanent member of the Security Council such as the United States. I completely understand those countries that say that they are afraid of retribution if they call out a larger, more powerful country for its actions. But that is precisely the reason to speak up, because all Member States are collectively more secure in a world where big and small Governments alike are held accountable for their actions.

Similarly, many on the Council focus on the importance of consensus. Again, for diplomats that is an understandable impulse and, as I said at the outset, we are so much stronger when we are united. But if our only goal is consensus, the risk is a lowest-common-denominator solution. That balance is tricky. In November, for example, when the Council renewed the mandate of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism to investigate the use of chemical weapons in Syria (see S/PV.7815), the United States spent weeks in painstaking negotiations with Russia on the terms. There was a similar negotiation process with China on the toughest-ever sanctions imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after the Kim Jong Un regime conducted two nuclear tests this year (resolution 2321 (2016)). But in both cases the resolutions were valuable, not only because the Council adopted them unanimously but because of their impact — attributing responsibility for chemical-weapons use in Syria and cutting off sources of revenue to the nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We can contrast that with the recent Council resolution 2336 (2016), on Syria, aimed at monitoring evacuations from eastern Aleppo. We can trumpet reaching consensus on that resolution, but we have to be careful not to miss the point. The resolution was adopted at the very end of a merciless military assault on Aleppo by Russia and the Al-Assad regime, after Russia had twice used its veto to block calls for a ceasefire that would have saved countless lives. I want to be clear today that we are rooting wholeheartedly for the efforts that Russia and Turkey are making to achieve a ceasefire, and we agree with Russia that we in the Council should do what we can to support that effort. Anything that could save lives or reduce violence is something that we should look at and offer to support. But again, consensus is not the measure of our success. That measure is our impact and whether, given the articulation of a ceasefire, the Al-Assad regime has in fact stopped bombing civilian areas, notably the Damascus suburbs and Idlib, where such attacks continue as we sit here.

Thirdly, we as Member States should empower the Secretary-General and his team to do their jobs. Part of that means encouraging the Secretary-General to bring issues to the Council's attention, and the United States therefore strongly supports the Secretary-General's use of Article 99 of the Charter, so that he can more actively warn the Council, early and often, when he believes it is warranted. Of course, that means that the Secretary-General deserves respect for the decisions he takes in order to manage the Organization.

Let us consider the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, which Secretary-General Guterres has already made a top priority through the creation of a new task force. That is an issue where we ought to agree that the Secretary-General must be able to do everything possible to stamp out this scourge, including by repatriating the units responsible for widespread and systematic abuses. Resolution 2272 (2016), adopted last year, endorsed the then-Secretary-

General's decision to use that authority. But we should remember that during those negotiations, several Council members focused instead on how to limit the Secretary-General's powers to send troops home. We should think about that — countries that responded to the issue of sexual exploitation by trying to tie the Secretary-General's hands. That was their focus, not the protection of potential victims.

A similar principle should apply for holding peacekeepers accountable for implementing their mandates. We were all very concerned when UNMISS personnel were either incapable of or unwilling to respond to calls for help after South Sudanese soldiers attacked the Terrain compound in July. If, however, we demand more from the United Nations in sustaining peace, we must respect the Secretary-General's decisions — including his personnel decisions — to strengthen systems that fall short. The United States claims no special exemption here when it comes to empowering the Secretary-General. We supported the selection of António Guterres precisely because he was independent-minded and prepared to stand up for the principles of the United Nations Charter and against bullying and lawlessness among Member States.

I would like to make a final point about how we can push ourselves to use our capabilities as the Security Council in order to promote peace. We have to look for ways to hear from the actual people whose lives our decisions affect. Here in the Council, or over at the General Assembly, it is still out of the ordinary to hear a voice that is not that of a diplomat or bureaucrat. So our discussions become sterile. We lose sight of the human stakes that should drive our work. One might think that the unprecedented number of trips that the Security Council has taken in recent years would help us understand what actual people are facing — and they do help. But during those trips, believe it or not, we spend too much time sitting in formal, scripted conversations in conference room after conference room. Incredibly, some Member States here in New York want even less access for representatives of civil society to come in and share different perspectives. They fight accreditation requests to the Non-Governmental Organization Committee of the Economic and Social Council in order to block non-governmental organizations from being part of United Nations deliberations.

As Permanent Representative for the past three and a half years, I know that the Council's richest, most meaningful exchanges have come when we have heard from real people — when Nadia Murad Basee Taha, a Yazidi woman trafficked by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), implored the Council to take action because ISIL, in her words, was using rape "to ensure that women could never again lead a normal life" (*S/PV.7585, p.6*); or when Dr. Zaher Sahloul returned from eastern Aleppo to relay the pleas of the city's doctors that wounded children be allowed to be evacuated; or when Jackson Niamah, a Liberian health-care worker, briefed the Council (see S/PV.7268), at the height of the Ebola crisis, on the anguish of turning away infected patients and their children for a lack of supplies and beds. When we on the Council show leadership and put people at the centre of our decisions, the effect is powerful. It can change minds.

We, as Council members, have helped keep people safe by adopting resolutions to cut off financing for terrorist organizations and to rally the world to stop the flow of foreign terrorist fighters. We helped enforce a rule against the use of chemical weapons when we adopted a resolution to dismantle the Al-Assad regime's stockpile of chemical weapons. We helped protect people from ethnic killings by deploying peacekeepers to the Central African Republic when a genocide seemed imminent. We helped set up a novel United Nations mission to fight the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, after delivering a wake-up call by holding our first-ever emergency meeting on a public health crisis here in the Council. The point is that the Council is essential. It is an essential tool for promoting a more peaceful world. But we need to work far harder and dig deep within ourselves to make sure that we use the capabilities at our disposal to help those who need us.

Mr. Fekl (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the initiative of the President to hold a debate today on an issue of great importance for the international community. France also welcomes the effort of the Secretary-General to place the maintenance of international peace and security, and conflict prevention in particular, at the heart of his agenda. Furthermore, France thanks him for the presentation of his first report to the Council today (see S/2017/6, annex). In a chaotic and uncertain world, we now need more than ever the benchmarks and the multilateral framework that the United Nations alone can provide. We look forward to working with the Secretary-General, especially on this crucial issue, in the years to come. Our debate today provides an opportunity to frame the action for future years under his mandate.

On this occasion France wishes to convey three key messages. The first message and priority is, of course, to strengthen prevention and to continue to invest in peacekeeping. Prevention is one of the foundational objectives of the United Nations, as was recalled by earlier speakers. In Article 1 of the Charter, the founders of the Organization set the objective to take effective collective measures to prevent and remove threats to peace. France supports all initiatives aimed at strengthening the prevention and mediation role of the United Nations. We do that because the nature of the crisis situations to which the Council must respond has changed, becoming increasingly intercommunal, transnational and asymmetrical.

How do we support such initiatives? We do it first by better anticipating the risks of crises with the help of an early warning system. That is the case today in the Gambia, for example. The challenge is to collectively improve the ability of the Council, which is an irreplaceable body, to anticipate crises and take action. The Secretary-General plays a key role in that respect. It is essential that the Secretary-General, as he is authorized to do under Article 99 of the Charter, alert us to any situation that he feels could jeopardize international peace and security. Similarly, the regular reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide are extremely useful for our work. The Security Council must make more systematic use of the information provided via those channels.

We must also strengthen our collective response through mediation and good offices. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the agreement that was signed on 31 December as a result of the efforts of the Congolese bishops provides a good example. France provided its full support to that initiative and worked toward the swift adoption of a presidential statement by the Council that fully supported that agreement (S/PRST/2017/1).

As we know, better prevention sometimes translates to greater pressure. Sanctions, and sometimes even the mere threat of resorting to sanctions, constitute one of the tools of the Security Council. Sanctions have made it possible to bring parties back to the table, to stop the spiral of violence and to stabilize explosive situations that would have completely degenerated otherwise. In Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, for example, sanctions have been useful in supporting the peace process and they were lifted once a more lasting phase of stability has been achieved. Sometimes our efforts find their limit, as in Burundi where mediation work has been hindered by the refusal of the Government to engage in a constructive dialogue with international partners.

The difficulty encountered in prevention efforts is to find the means to act, even when there are just hints of probable deterioration, without being blocked by arguments relating to the non-interference in internal affairs and the respect for the sovereignty of States. The Council must be able to act whenever it is necessary. Overcoming that dilemma and those risks is, among other reasons, why France has taken the initiative to propose a limitation on the use of the right of veto in cases involving the risk of mass atrocities. When prevention fails and violence worsens, it is our responsibility to stop its escalation and to intervene. This is what France has done, at the request of its partners, in both Mali and the Central African Republic.

In that context, peacekeeping operations are an essential Security Council tool to promote a return to peace and to enable consolidation. When a crisis unfolds, security must be restored quickly so as to allow for a political settlement. We know that without security, no real progress is possible. Such operations must be able to benefit from resources that fit the requirements of the environment in which they operate and must be able to rely on political processes through robust and flexible mandates. The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic provide very clear illustrations of the problem.

The second message and priority is that we must help vulnerable countries develop their own capacities, and we must address their vulnerabilities upstream. In order to do that, we must make further progress in the integration of the actions of the various components of the United Nations system. We advocate a cross-cutting and integrated approach that combines security, humanitarian, political and development actions over time with a continuity of the prevention, maintenance and consolidation of peace.

The following is a simple and widely shared observation: peace and development are linked. Many conflicts and civil wars are rooted in development and governance issues, the very issues that lie at the heart of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular

Goal 16. In order to prevent conflicts, we must enable the most vulnerable countries to deal with the fragility brought on by crises and terrorism. To that end, we should work to combat unemployment, in particular youth unemployment; address the lack of public services and public infrastructure; put in place a system of inclusive governance and robust administration; promote a judicial system that enables everyone to have access to quality justice; ensure respect for human rights; and ease tensions over natural resources.

France is a resolute supporter of the 2030 Agenda, which is why we were among the first to present our national programme for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the High-Level Political Forum in July.

Wherever France is engaged militarily, we simultaneously undertake cooperation and development assistance in all of the areas mentioned. And that has produced results. Acting on the entire spectrum of issues has enabled the establishment of a constitutional process and the holding of elections in the Central African Republic; the training of security and police forces in Mali and in Niger; and crisis recovery and the return of growth in Côte d'Ivoire.

Allow me also to stress the role of climate change. While it is not a direct cause of conflict, it exacerbates vulnerabilities, aggravates their most immediate causes, and threatens progress. And, even if it is not yet a cause today, in the future climate change may itself become a direct cause of conflict. It strikes the poorest populations and the most fragile States hardest. Sub-Saharan Africa and small developing islands are the primary victims. That is why the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement is a necessity and a matter of urgency for peace and security. Major regional initiatives such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel deserve our full support.

The third priority concerns linkages among the various tools, depending on their contexts and the level urgency. Under the auspices of the Secretary-General, the cooperation of the United Nations with external actors must also be strengthened, and we know that it will be. I am thinking of the national authorities, whose ownership of prevention and development activities is essential, but also of international, regional and subregional organizations, including the European Union and the African Union, which are major partners of the United Nations. Finally, I am thinking of international financial institutions, such as development banks, civil society and private partners.

The framework sketched today must find concrete and immediate application in our response to the challenges posed to peace and security. To conclude, I would like to emphasize a few crises that we ought to prioritize.

The resolution of the Syrian crisis will require an exemplary partnership and full mobilization of the members of the Security Council in support of the inter-Syrian negotiations. Such negotations will have to be fully integrated in the framework of the United Nations process, in line with the Geneva Communiqué and resolution 2254 (2015).

Libya will require special vigilance, given the increased risk of civil war. The mediation work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya is essential in that regard, to support the efforts of the Government of National Unity to be inclusive.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the support of the United Nations and the Security Council for a full and swift implementation of the 31 December agreement is necessary for the success of the ongoing process. The coming weeks will be crucial in that regard.

In Mali, the Security Council must do still more to enable the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to accomplish its mission and to provide it with the necessary personnel and equipment. We must also maintain the pressure on the parties in order to ensure a swift implementation of the Algiers Agreement, which is urgent.

We are at a pivotal moment. While the demand for conflict prevention and the links between peace and development have become clear, it is now up to the international community, above all the United Nations, to translate that will into action. The Secretary-General will always be able to count on the initiative and support of France of his actions in this regard, whether in the field or in the Security Council.

Sir Alan Duncan (United Kingdom): It gives me enormous pleasure to be able to sit here on behalf of the United Kingdom and extend a warm welcome to Mr. António Guterres as the new Secretary-General. On a very personal level, I recall the work that he and I did together when he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and I was the United Kingdom's Minister of State for International

Development. I am glad that such cooperation can continue in both of our new roles. I hope that the United Kingdom's generous aid budget, much of which used to go in the direction of the Office of the High Commissioner, will not be forgotten.

Mr. Guterres assumes his role at a time of widespread instability and the existence of far too many long-running conflicts across the world. The United Kingdom firmly believes in the role of the United Nations in upholding the fundamental principles of a rules-based international order, which must underpin our understanding of what is right and what is wrong in the world.

I would also like to thank the Swedish presidency for convening today's open debate. You and I, Madam President, have also worked together in the past, when you were Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict. I salute your continuing efforts to place conflict prevention and gender at the centre of your foreign policy.

Ever since the inception of the United Nations, the United Kingdom has been at the forefront of decisive action by the United Nations to prevent conflict. On this very day, 71 years ago, London hosted the first meeting of the General Assembly. On the agenda in 1946 were two issues that we still face today: sustaining peace, and supporting refugees driven from their homes by the scourge of war. Both seven decades ago and today, the work of the United Nations on those issues — and, of course, many more — remains fundamentally about addressing conflict.

However, we should recognize that while the issues may seem the same seven decades on, the response of the United Nations certainly is not. We have tools at our disposal that our predecessors never had. We have tools for conflict prevention, mitigation, mediation, stabilization and recovery. Thus, the challenge is how to use such tools effectively and, often, many of them at the same time. We therefore fully endorse the Secretary-General's vision for an inclusive approach to conflict prevention, peace and development — the peace continuum — and his commitment to achieving the reforms needed to deliver it. The United Kingdom sees five key building blocks in the realization of that vision.

First, there is development. We share the Secretary-General's view that development is fundamental to addressing the drivers of conflict. That is why our own aid budget is increasingly focused on the world's most fragile places. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States laid the foundations for achieving the global goals of the United Nations. Together, we now must build on those foundations and harness the political and security tools of the United Nations.

Secondly, we need to equip ourselves with the expertise needed to take action sooner. Two obvious steps are improving situational awareness, which builds on New Zealand's recent work, and supporting senior United Nations officials when they flag risks and challenge the Council to respond. The recent briefing on South Sudan by Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Mr. Adama Dieng, is an excellent example.

Thirdly, we need to recommit to making greater use of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, including enabling the Secretary-General to make full use of the tools at his disposal, such as his own good offices and expert mediation by his envoys and others.

Fourthly, we need to encourage regional responsibility, because, try as we might to seek solutions from New York, the best solutions are often found at the local level. We should continue to support regional organizations that show leadership in preventing conflict. That includes organizations that span multiple regions. For example, the Commonwealth has dedicated Commonwealth Day and the ensuing year to peace-building, with a focus on practical action among its 52 member States.

Finally, we must ensure that United Nations deployments are fit for purpose. That means that they must be properly prepared and equipped, with each mission tailored to the task at hand. It means that the Council must be prepared to focus its resources in order to deliver those effective missions. It means that we must deliver what we are calling "the three P's", as agreed upon at the Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London in September 2016: better mission planning, more pledges of personnel and equipment, and improved performance.

The tools of the United Nations provide the best means to prevent conflict and lay the foundations for sustained peace. However, we must deploy the right tools at the right time. In many cases, that means that we should deploy them sooner — warning rather than reacting, and mediating rather than peacekeeping. That is why the peace continuum is so important. It requires us to develop greater awareness of possible flashpoints so that we can chart a more peaceful course.

We agree with the Secretary-General that if this great Organization is to continue to achieve its objectives, it must be simpler, more decentralized and more flexible. I am confident that between the Secretariat and Member States, we have the knowledge, skills and will to make that happen. Today, I reiterate the pledge of the United Kingdom that we will fully support that effort, just as did 71 years ago.

Mr. Kishi (Japan): I would like to begin by thanking you, Madam President, for organizing and personally presiding over this open debate with a very timely subject. I would also like to welcome Secretary-General Guterres to the Security Council.

We thank the Secretary-General for sharing with us his determination today. We are very happy to have him as Secretary-General of the United Nations. He has our full support.

During the past two years, various review processes have brought to our attention the importance of conflict prevention. Conflicts in Syria, Yemen and many parts of Africa demonstrate the cost of insufficient efforts in conflict prevention. The Security Council has a key responsibility in dealing with immediate conflicts. However, it should also demonstrate results in conflict prevention — a far less costly endeavour — by making the best use of such tools as Security Council missions to the field. We would like to see a Security Council that is a leader not only in resolving conflicts, but also in preventing them. We must weave the concept of sustaining peace into every aspect of United Nations activities.

Japan fully embraces this challenge. We believe that peace is a long-term process and our emphasis has always been on the comprehensiveness and seamlessness of our assistance. Human security is an important pillar of Japan's foreign policy. Based on this concept, Japan has consistently provided human-centred, comprehensive and preventive assistance through harmonized efforts with various aid bodies. In Mindanao, the Philippines, we have provided assistance to track-two dialogues, as well as track-one peace negotiations, based on this principle. Our official development assistance provided peace dividends by addressing poverty, high youth unemployment and social injustice on a preventive basis. We have also contributed $410 million to the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security since its establishment in 1999.

Japan has been consistently committed to peacebuilding and in particular to capacity- and institution-building. In Timor-Leste, Japan has supported State-building efforts through development assistance, as well as the dispatch of our self-defence forces and civilian police personnel. We have also exerted leadership as the Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Peacebuilding Commission. Japan will continue to be a leader in institution-building — the backbone of sustainable peacebuilding.

We listened to the statement of the Secretary-General carefully. We welcome his serious plan of action and look forward to discussing his initiatives further. We will provide our utmost support. We hope he will actively employ his good offices to address conflicts and disputes, including those in the Middle East region. We look forward to working closely with him in the Security Council. We also encourage his proactive use of situational awareness and horizon-scanning briefings as means to reinforce conflict prevention. We ask that he please make full use of his power to bring matters to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. We look forward to his frequent presence at the Council's informal consultations.

Japan would like to underline that United Nations reform is needed to sustain peace effectively. Institutional silos must be removed and coordination must be reinforced for a seamless and holistic approach to sustaining peace. This will involve not only increased efficiency and cohesion between the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Support Office, but far greater coordination among actors across all three pillars of United Nations engagement. We are encouraged by his track record of reform at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and his promotion of the humanitarian-development nexus. We welcome his initiative to reform the Secretariat, so that he can better perform his functions particularly in conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Japanese diplomacy centres on being a proactive contributor to peace. As a member of the Security Council, we will work closely with the Secretary-General and Council members through a proactive and results-oriented approach. Japan pledges to serve as a responsible Council member and a dependable partner to the new Secretary-General in promoting international peace and stability.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): We appreciate your initiative, Madam President, to bring to the attention of the Council one of the most critical topics in the field of peace and security. We share the ideas outlined in your concept note (S/2017/6, annex). We carefully read your manifesto on Sweden taking a Security Council seat and wish to assure you, Madam, of our full support of Sweden's priorities, which soundly resonate with our own.

We welcome the Secretary-General's views on the ways to collaborate with the Council. We are pleased to note that the approach presented today by Secretary-General Guterres fully coincides with the position expressed by him as Secretary-General-elect at the informal meeting with the Council convened last November on Ukraine's initiative.

It is not only symbolic that our meeting today coincides with the date the General Assembly was first convened in London in 1946. Seven decades ago, the founding Members faithfully believed that the Organization had to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The task is yet to be accomplished.

It is sad to acknowledge that the world has not become much safer. Some of those who signed the Charter tend to liberally interpret its principles for their own convenience. As a result, the international community has to deal again and again with conflicts — conflicts that broke out because of the erosion of rule of law, gross human rights violations and a lack of international institutional capacities to bring those responsible to account.

Being a lawyer myself, I want to stress Ukraine's firm and unequivocal position that international law is one for all. It applies to all United Nations Member States equally and without exclusions. There are no big or small States before the law, rich or poor, more or less equal. International law is one for all with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations at the forefront.

The Syrian conflict is probably the most brutal armed conflict of recent times. We have witnessed the inability of the Council to react appropriately to the butchery and slaughter that had been happening in Aleppo and other areas of Syria due to six consecutive vetoes from the same permanent member. What is the result? Aleppo is bombed into dust, many innocent lives are lost, the declared ceasefire is barely holding and prospects for a settlement are yet to be seen. It was the Council's collective responsibility to prevent such a course of events from happening and to put an end to that conflict. The Council has, unfortunately, failed to do so. We still believe that ongoing efforts will bear results and that a sustainable ceasefire will pave the way for the start of meaningful political dialogue in Syria.

In the contemporary globalized world, none of the conflicts that we are facing is too distant. The international community has spent enormous resources in helping to rebuild war-torn societies and to assist people in need. Moreover, Europe is also not immune from conflicts.

Ukraine has been countering military aggression for nearly three years, one that has taken on all forms of hybrid warfare. What has happened? The General Assembly has adopted resolutions condemning the aggression and the occupation of Crimea. In the attempts by the Security Council to stop the military aggression, we were again blocked by the same permanent member. We expected the former Secretary-General to provide his good offices, but he did not go beyond expressing concern. Something similar happened in Georgia in 2008. The Security Council members, and especially the permanent members, have a special responsibility — both the founding permanent members and the most recent one, the Russian Federation, which acquired the status of occupying Power in General Assembly resolution 71/205, adopted in December 2016.

The Security Council, which was established after the Second World War, during which time Europe had been the primary battlefield, must again today pay special attention to the stress on international peace and security caused by conflicts on that continent — something that was inconceivable, even during the time of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which was a permanent member of the Security Council before the Russian Federation.

Prevention is a powerful tool and bold tactic, and we are particularly encouraged by the special emphasis that the Secretary-General placed on that tool in his statement today. The United Nations has to use all its potential to prevent the outbreak, resurgence and prolongation of armed conflicts. We welcome the concepts of sustaining peace and a people-centered approach that were reflected in various decisions adopted by the Council and the General Assembly last year. Prevention is but one of the hallmarks of Ukraine's foreign policy. It covers all three United Nations pillars: peace and security, development and human rights.

With regard to human rights, it was through Ukraine's initiative in 2010 — years prior to the coming of war to our country — that the Human Rights Council adopted the first-ever thematic resolution (resolution 14/5) on the role of prevention in the promotion and protection of human rights. As it is well known, gross human rights violations are often a precursor to the outbreak of a military conflict. It is also a certainty that the Government of an aggressor country violates the human and civil rights of its own citizens, thereby getting a free hand to launch an assault on its neighbours. In September 2016, the Human Rights Council reinforced the message to bolster the work on the prevention of human rights violations by adopting another resolution (resolution 33/6), sponsored by 74 States, including by the members of the Security Council. Yet in November 2016, we saw desperate attempts by some Member States that are at the same time aggressors to prevent the Third Committee of the General Assembly from addressing human rights violations in certain countries.

Conflict prevention is the most effective way to avert human suffering, as well as the least expensive tool in conflict resolution. Unfortunately, all too often, Member States tend to keep their heads in the sand, until it is too late. That pattern must be changed in order to ensure that Srebrenica, Rwanda and Aleppo do not happen again. The Secretary-General should play a special role in prevention. We are looking forward to his proactive, unbiased and independent action, which includes bringing the most worrying situations to the attention of the Security Council. That function of the Secretary- General is envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations but has, unfortunately, been underutilized for many years. That is why we welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to increase the capabilities of the Secretariat in strategic information analysis. It is crucial also for the Secretary-General to give a new breath of air to Article 99. We expect that those initiatives will also result in more substantive and informative reporting on the issues on the Council's agenda.

Another important but unused tool at the Secretary-General's disposal is his good offices and other political enablers. Those means are rarely seen in play, whether it be a matter of conflict-prone or de facto conflict-affected States like Ukraine. We sincerely believe that the new Secretary-General can skilfully manage the entire content of the toolbox given to him by the Charter, and he should not hesitate to use it wherever necessary. One more area of interaction between the Secretary-General and the Council is peacekeeping, in which Ukraine continues to be a reliable partner of the Organization. The role of the Secretary-General in further improving the way in which that adaptable instrument and flagship activity of our Organization is utilized cannot be overestimated.

Preventing conflicts from entering into a vicious spiral of violence often depends on the ability of the Organization to deploy the necessary resources at the earliest stage. In that regard, the Secretary-General can and should play an important role. In cases where the deployment of a peacekeeping mission is requested, the Council can benefit from an early and comprehensive assessment of the situation on the ground and recommendations on possible mandates for a peacekeeping operation from the Secretary-General. That should be done by default, once the request has been received by the Secretariat, thereby enabling the Council to take an informed and timely decision.

In conclusion, conflict prevention can be successful only as the result of the collective efforts of all stakeholders within and beyond the Organization. We believe that the United Nations should continue to build and enhance its strategic partnership with regional organizations that share the principles set forth in the Charter and respect the rules and norms of international law. We welcome the close cooperation and partnership that the United Nations has established with the European Union and the African Union. We also see potential in establishing closer United Nations interaction with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) aimed at contributing to OSCE peace activities on the ground.

We trust that the new Secretary-General and the new leadership of the Secretariat will be true custodians of the principles of the Charter and able to take a proactive approach to conflict prevention and resolution.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Sweden for convening and presiding over this debate, as well as for the concept note (S/2017/6, annex), which was prepared and circulated in a timely manner. We also thank the Secretary-General for his outstanding statement. It is very encouraging for us to see that in his New Year's message, coinciding with the beginning of his new mandate, he has made the issue of peace a priority for 2017, which is a matter that depends on all of us.

We also appreciate the importance that he attaches to diplomacy and mediation as fundamental tools in the search for peace and the prevention of new conflicts. Moreover, we especially welcome his willingness to work to develop a comprehensive, modern and effective peacebuilding architecture in order to bring about long-term development and strengthen the prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts. The broad review that was made in the United Nations in 2015 has been very clear with regard to the need to prioritize the prevention of conflicts.

Uruguay believes that it is important to maintain the momentum created by the concurrent adoption of Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262 on 27 April 2016 on the review of the peacekeeping architecture, so as to continue to produce constructive input concerning peacebuilding throughout the United Nations system.

We should nevertheless ask ourselves what tools are available to us in order to prevent conflict. First, we have the United Nations Charter and institutions, as well as regional and subregional organizations. The work of prevention requires a political commitment on the part of relevant actors in order to address situations that, owing to their character, pose the risk of a resurgence of or a return to conflict.

In the region to which my country belongs, there exist regional and subregional organizations that have contributed successfully to preventing potential conflicts through mechanisms such as good offices and mediation, among others.

The Security Council, under the Charter, is entrusted with a responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Preventive diplomacy efforts on the part of the Council are relevant, as it is the system's principal organ for the maintenance of peace. But to that end, it is key that all of its members, not just some of them, have early access to the relevant information with regard to possible breaches of the peace.

In this regard, Uruguay supported last year New Zealand's initiative to hold periodic situational-awareness meetings with the various departments and offices of the Secretariat. Uruguay, as a traditional troop-contributing countries, knows first-hand of the challenges that arise in the field during and after conflict. The work that our Blue Helmets have done and will do can very often be considered as early peacebuilding. This coincides with the view expressed in the review of the peacebuilding architecture, namely, that peacebuilding tasks are not limited to post-conflict situations but are in fact part of a continuum encompassing the period before, during and after conflict.

The three pillars of the United Nations are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, it is possible to build peace only when there is respect for human rights in developed societies that respect the rule of law. The root causes of conflicts must be overcome by putting into practice the various instruments at the disposal of the United Nations. Fighting organized crime, terrorism, extreme poverty, discrimination and other scourges affecting societies should be a priority.

The maintenance of peace is a complex process that covers a broad range of tasks and actors and that requires integration and coordination with the Government of the country involved, leading to dialogue and peace processes that are inclusive and representative of society as a whole. In this regard, we would like to stress that the role of women is essential in order to ensure peace.

Uruguay reiterates its commitment to international peace and security. Sustainable peace is everyone's business. It is the goal towards which we must work together in order to translate into action that which we so often preach in speeches, resolutions and other documents.

The President: As we discuss the importance of sustaining peace, we are appalled to hear that another suicide attack has taken place today, this time in a civilian-populated area in Kabul. I strongly condemn the attack, which resulted in many deaths and injuries, and we offer condolences to the victims and their families as well as our support to the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China commends Sweden for the initiative of holding today's open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and welcomes you, Foreign Minister Wallström, to New York to preside over this meeting. China salutes Secretary-General Guterres as he assumes his new functions, thanks him for his statement and looks forward to his greater engagement in the promotion of the cause of the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Peace is the common aspiration and lofty goal of humankind. However, today's world, far from being peaceful, is marred by alternating escalation in regional hotspot issues, the spread of terrorism and brewing traditional and non-traditional security challenges.

A comprehensive and durable peace remains elusive. How to effectively prevent conflict and build sustainable peace is an important issue facing the United Nations and the vast majority of its Member States. I wish to emphasize the following points.

First, it is essential to forge a correct security concept. In today's world, countries are interconnected and affect each other in terms of security. No single country can achieve absolute security purely on its own, nor can any country reap security from the insecurity suffered by others.

The international community must firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; foster a common, integrated, cooperative and sustainable new security concept; build a global partnership based on dialogue instead of confrontation and partnership instead of alliance; bring to the fore the crucial role of the United Nations and its Security Council in putting an end to wars and maintaining peace; and build a common security architecture based on equity, justice, joint contributions and shared benefits.

Secondly, efforts must be made to promote common development. As peace and development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, the causes of security threats such as war, conflict and terrorism all can be traced back to poverty and underdevelopment, and, as such, relevant solutions are also to be found in development. It is important to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; forge a global governance concept based on the principle of achieving shared growth through joint reflection and by pooling our strengths; seek development prospects through openness, innovation, inclusiveness and mutual benefit; properly tackle global challenges such as climate change and the refugee crisis; help developing countries to enhance their ability to eliminate poverty and achieve self-development; and, ultimately, achieve common development and promote durable peace.

Thirdly, preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding must be strengthened. It is important to maintain a general direction towards peaceful peaceful solutions to disputes. Differences should be resolved through political means such as dialogue and negotiations. It is imperative to help countries emerging from conflict enhance their own abilities in the areas of political security, economic development and social integration, thus solidifying the foundation for peace. United Nations organs such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission must implement their respective functions and leverage their respective advantages, working synergetically to uphold the sovereignty of the countries concerned and respecting their views and focusing on their needs.

Fourthly, the diversity of civilizations must be respected. There is no superior civilization, culture or religion. There must be mutual respect and equal treatment among all civilizations, cultures and religions. The United Nations should advocate a culture of peace by affirming that harmony can be achieved through diversity and strength attained by embracing inclusiveness and differences. The United Nations should actively promote dialogue and exchanges of mutual learning among different civilizations, cultures and religions. Countries and the international community at large must work together, practice openness and inclusiveness, and seek common ground while respecting differences, so as to make dialogue among civilizations a bridge to greater friendship among nations and a linchpin of world peace.

China is a defender and a builder of world peace and has made positive contributions to the promotion of peace, progress and the development of humankind. At the series of summits held on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations, China's President, Xi Jinping, called for carrying forward the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and for the building of a new international relationship with cooperation and a win-win philosophy at its centre and the forging of a community with a shared future.

China is ready to work hand in hand with the rest of the international community for the maintenance of world peace and achieving shared development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Sweden has begun its two years of labour on the Security Council by taking the Chair of the presidency at the very start. We wish it every success. We are sure that in the conduct of our work the land of Dag Hammarskjöld, Olof Palme and Jan Eliasson will exemplify the excellent foreign policy traditions that we know of old.

We welcome the participation of Secretary-General António Guterres in his first Security Council open debate. It is significant that the new Secretary-General began his work with the appeal for peace that he voiced on 1 January. We share the basic premise of his brief, which is that the pursuit of peace should permeate every area of our Organization's activities, from ending hostilities to concluding negotiations designed to achieve political solutions to conflicts. He made important observations in his impressive statement today, and we should all vigorously support his message that 2017 must be a year for peace, not just in words but in our practical actions.

The United Nations and its Security Council play a significant role in preventing conflicts. We agree that their successful, timely prevention depends to a large degree on combining all the tools in the United Nations arsenal — Chapters I and VI of the Charter, along with a number of additional decisions, including resolution 2171 (2014), on conflict prevention. The time has come for a dispassionate look at what has not worked and why, and to draw the appropriate conclusions. Right now, at the beginning of a new Secretary-General's term, is the perfect moment for that.

However, we should not forget that every situation requires a delicate, unbiased approach and patient efforts to arrive at a settlement that is unique to it. A one-size-fits-all model does not work. We believe firmly that we cannot base early prevention on some randomly chosen combination of various indicators of conflict, which can leave the door open for potential misuse. An artificial emphasis on separate mechanisms available to the United Nations — even in such important areas as the protection of human rights or the Sustainable Development Goals — is even less appropriate. The non-transparent assessment methods of specific separate entities should not be used as a basis for general preventive action.

With regard to the concept of sustaining peace, we see it as the acknowledgement by all national participants of the processes for sharing responsibility for peace, tackling the underlying causes of conflict and reconstructing and developing their own Governments as well as preventing potential crisis situations. The term was first used in resolution 2282 (2016), on reforming our peacebuilding architecture, which aimed to adapt foundational documents to modern realities. At the same time, the mandates of the various bodies and the fundamentals of their work remained unchanged — that is, the primary responsibility both for preventing and dealing with the consequences of conflict is borne by the States themselves, and the parameters of international support, should it prove necessary, depend on the States' decisions.

Conflict prevention is sometimes presented as if it were some kind of new, all-inclusive priority for the United Nations. But the fact remains that this task was established by the Charter 70 years ago. Why it has not been implemented as it should have is a good question. Perhaps it is about political will, or the lack of it. We all agree that prevention is cheaper and more effective than cure, but deciding on a diagnosis is another matter altogether. It is worth recalling here that Member States still disagree about the former Secretary-General's proposed possible indicators for the inevitability of a crisis. History has often shown, for instance, that crises can arise in countries where there are no human rights violations or lack of development. And yet for some reason external interference in the affairs of other States and in support of coups has not been mentioned as a cause of crises, although it is the consequences of just such issues that we are currently dealing with in a whole slew of cases.

We should also take a fresh look at the coordination of international efforts at conflict prevention. It is essential to ensure that we make more active use of the potential for prevention offered by regional and subregional organizations. Of course, Member States also expect constructive support from the United Nations Secretariat. We hope that in their preparation of relevant reports, its staff, while not forgetting the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, can analyse the issues intelligently and share their experience in resolving them. Those reports can be useful if they are put together professionally and impartially. It is also important to ensure that they focus on the practical impact of the measures proposed.

We are ready to take into account any initiatives from the Secretariat in the area of conflict prevention or raising awareness of potential threats, but they must add value, taking into account the approaches of Member States and the main parties to a conflict. That applies particularly to the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which does not take full account of the real causes of that dangerous phenomenon and ignores the primary role of States in combating it. And that issue should not overshadow the more urgent global problem of an unprecedentedly serious terrorist threat, which we need a genuinely collective effort to fight.

That is why we propose coming together and acting in genuine unity within the framework of a broad anti-terrorist coalition, as Russia's President Vladimir Putin discussed in his address to the General Assembly at its seventieth session (see A/70/PV.13). We all need to be guided not by ambitions but by our shared values and interests, based on the Charter of the United Nations and other applicable norms of international law, as well as our international partnership agreements, the most important of which is the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. For our part, we affirm our commitment to strengthen the preventive potential of the United Nations for combating crises, as reflected in the Russian Federation's foreign policy concept, updated in November.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the fact that we can speculate as long as we want as to how many conflicts could be avoided if the United Nations intervened in time, but the fact remains that a significant number of them have been the result of irresponsible external interference in the affairs of other States, including the overthrow of legitimate regimes. We have no right to squander the credibility of the United Nations on such adventurism. All our actions should be carefully verified and, most importantly, enjoy the support of all parties to a conflict.

I cannot omit to comment briefly on two statements made today, the first being that of the United States. We are already accustomed to the fact that the notion of American exceptionalism extends to procedural issues, as evidenced by a contempt for time limits that shows disrespect for others. It has been harder to get used to the random citations of history. Speaking of sovereignty, one cannot help recalling that it has been the gross violation of such by the United States that has put a number of countries in difficult situations that we have had to deal with over and over again. The United States invasion of Iraq not only destabilized the Middle East but gave birth to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Its gross violations of Syria's sovereignty have resulted in the further spread of the terrorist threat. The overthrow of the Government in Libya has had terrible consequences not only in Libya itself but for the entire African continent. The flood of refugees into Europe from Syria and Libya has been a direct result of Washington's adventurist policies. The deplorable situation in South Sudan has a great deal to do with Washington's years of attempts to overthrow the regime in Khartoum. The crisis in Ukraine would not have happened if the United States and its allies had not begun telling Kyiv which agreements it could subscribe to and when. The outgoing administration of Barack Obama is desperately seeking people to blame for its failures in both domestic and foreign policy. It is regrettable that even the Security Council has become a forum for such futile efforts.

Very briefly, the statement of the representative of Ukraine contained obvious legal and political errors. Kyiv should stop firing on the civilian residents of the Donbas region and should fulfil the Minsk agreements, which will soon be two years old. First and foremost, it must launch a direct dialogue with the citizens of Donetsk and Luhansk.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to once again wish Secretary-General António Guterres every success.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres and to express Egypt's full support for his work under his important mandate. I would also like to express our appreciation to Sweden for convening this debate, which addresses a central aspect of the future role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

In the light of the emerging and unconventional challenges in our world — including the proliferation of extremist organizations, organized crime, migration and environmental challenges — we need to develop a creative approach to address them. Given the nature of those challenges, an overlap between conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping and sustainable development is inevitable

The comprehensive reviews carried out in 2015 have given us a clear understanding of the impact of those challenges on the role of the United Nations and on the concepts governing peacebuilding and sustainability. The subsequent resolution 2282 (2016) constituted the political framework for such a conceptual development. One of the most important conclusions to be drawn from those reviews is the imperative to abandon the concept of crisis or conflict management and to adopt an approach that seeks to either prevent conflicts before they occur or to find a sustainable resolution by addressing their root causes. We must also take into consideration that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to all conflicts.

To that end, we call for improving the Secretariat's analytical capabilities to suggest and propose detailed solutions commensurate with the nature, dimensions and varying contexts of every conflict. Egypt believes that such a flexible analytical approach would help the Organization and the Security Council to determine the best means to address each stage of a conflict, whether by deploying or amending a mandate, by withdrawing a peacekeeping operation or a special political mission, by resorting exclusively to mediation, by imposing or lifting a sanctions regime or by giving precedence to the efforts of regional and subregional organizations.

The concept of sustainable peace is the ultimate goal of the work of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. According to that concept, the Organization must be able to adopt a political and programmatic framework, especially in countries and regions emerging from conflict. The political framework calls for continued and long-term regional and international support of the political process in order to achieve political stability and security, as a prelude to the programmatic framework. That framework should invest in national capacity-building to manage national reconciliation processes, to recover economic activity and to improve the ability of Governments to meet the basic education and health needs of their citizens.

It is only natural for women and young people to play a central role in all phases of planning, implementation and follow-up of all sustainable peace processes as a means to move from conflict to peace. We believe that such an approach gives an objective and comprehensive meaning to the concept of national ownership.

Assistance programmes should focus on building the national institutions and capacities that will enable transformative efforts to achieve sustainable peace. Therefore, the United Nations must adopt a new approach when determining the priorities of such assistance programmes. National forces must be able to set those priorities, instead of them being imposed by donor countries.

The magnitude of the challenges to sustainable peace requires a shift in the United Nations system at the cultural, structural and administrative levels. Resolution 2282 (2016) comprises a pragmatic framework for improving the role of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, in order to ensure consistency between the programmatic and political frameworks of sustainable peace. Given the overlap between political, security, economic and institutional aspects of sustainable peace, the Peacebuilding Commission must play a role that varies depending on the nature of each conflict. Therefore, the Commission must demonstrate the necessary flexibility to deal with every conflict separately.

Predictable funding for efforts to sustain peace represents another main challenge. We need to adopt funding mechanisms based on a broad partnership among the United Nations, international financial institutions and bilateral donors. Those mechanism sshould take into consideration a degree of risk as a by-product of investment in sustaining peace. The Peacebuilding Fund can play an important role in that regard, and all donor countries should be encouraged to provide it with long-term funding.

We look forward to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General on resolution 2282 (2016). We stress the need for that report to include a comprehensive vision of how to improve the role of our Organization and the tools available to it to contribute to sustaining peace, based on the outcomes of the previous comprehensive reviews. That would represent a new agenda for peace that coincides with the passing of 25 years since the issuance of the Agenda for Peace report (S/24111) by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The challenges of our day are different from those existing when the report was issued in 1992, but the goal remains the same. It is the need for the United Nations to regain its important role, as enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter. We hope that the new Secretary-General will be able to formulate that comprehensive vision and to garner international commitment for such a vision.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I apologize that Senegalese Foreign Minister

Mankeur Ndiaye, who had planned to participate in the debate, had to attend a limited summit yesterday in Abuja to discuss the situation in Gambia. He has asked me, on behalf of Senegal, to congratulate the Government of Sweden for this month's presidency of the Security Council, which began directly after its accession to the Council. We are pleased to participate in this public debate that Sweden has decided to devote to the crucially important topic of conflict prevention and sustainable peace. Senegal attaches particular importance to that theme as it applies to the Sahel region of Africa, a region that is, unfortunately, marked by terrorism and violent extremism — scourges that my country resolutely seeks to combat alongside the international community.

I also wish to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, whose important statement helped us better understand the matter under review. Senegal will spare no effort to work with the Secretary-General to contribute to making 2017 a year of peace, as the Secretary-General has proposed.

The Security Council needs a paradigm shift in order to redefine our working priorities and strategies for promoting international peace and security. We need to invest more in prevention by addressing at the earliest possible stage the underlying causes of conflict throughout the globalized world, in particular in Africa. Let us make no mistake — the effectiveness and efficiency of our efforts, and thus the credibility of the Organization, will essentially depend on our capacity to detect in a timely manner, better analyse and thereby prevent threats old and new to international peace and security.

We have many tools at our disposal to that end, but what often lacks is political will, undermining early action, in particular on the part of the Security Council. As a result, we act late and react after the fact, frequently to little effect and always at high cost. The reviews of peacekeeping operations, the peacebuilding architecture and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, all found that prevention needs a new impulse. The cross-cutting dimension of the preventive approach requires the development of synergies among those three complementary reviews so as to develop consistent strategies to promote lasting peace, bolstered by political sols that take the protection and promotion of human and national rights into due account, which is the only guarantee of real human security.

In that context, the role of the Security Council, the principal organ entrusted with international peace and security, is obvious, but we must acknowledge that the paucity or lack of unity and political often paralyse this organ, as noted throughout 2016. That is why the Secretary-General's call to make 2017 a year of peace strongly resonates with us. The leadership and work of the Secretary-General as the moral authority of our Organization, supported by his special representatives and envoys, must be underscored, given their potential impact on Security Council decisions and the actions of parties to a conflict. Article 1 and Chapters VI and VII of the Charter of the United Nations are at the Secretary-General's disposal and must be resorted to.

To return to a statement that you made, Madam, and that we endorse, investing in prevention costs one-tenth of the price of post-conflict operations, but we are all aware that few resources are devoted to prevention activities, as opposed to those spent on peacekeeping operations. The Organization must therefore abandon the practice of managing rather than preventing crises. That is why peacebuilding, which is the key to prevention, remains a secondary activity and still lacks sustained and predictable financing, despite the existence of the Peacebuilding Fund.

The adoption on 27 April 2016 by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the simultaneous resolutions 70/262 and 2282 (2016), respectively, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, was important in that it indicated a willingness to transform our approach in that area. We hope that the political will necessary can be mustered to translate that collective commitment into specific action so as to correct the anomalies and gaps that have been identified to date. That requires first and foremost the effective generation and allocation of predictable resources for essential prevention and mediation support activities. After that, we must adopt a comprehensive and consistent approach that takes due account of the links between sustainable development, peace, good governance, human rights and the rule of law, as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 16 on peaceful societies.

Furthermore, we recall that the United Nations is not the only actor in the area of peace and security and therefore cannot carry this heavy burden alone. In line with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, it must strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and encourage the development of regional responses to crises. Indeed, given their proximity to conflicts and enhanced knowledge of local realities and conflict dynamics, regional and subregional organizations can help to better define appropriate intervention policies.

In that regard, Senegal supports the recommendations made in the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on strengthening the prevention and peacekeeping capacities of the African Union. The African Union, as a strategic partner of the United Nations in this area, has a certain capacity to provide first responses to crises in Africa, but it suffers one major handicap that undermines its efforts to that end, namely, the acute problem of funding peace operations in Africa. Resolution 2320 (2016), adopted last November under the Senegalese presidency, therefore invites the United Nations to provide greater support to the laudable efforts of the African Union by sharing the financial burden of deploying African peacekeeping operations.

It is clear that the key challenge facing the United Nations as António Guterres takes office is connected to its capacity to anticipate and better understand the causes of old and new conflicts, better detect new and asymmetrical threats, and prevent crises and conflicts, as stipulated in Article 1 of the Charter. It was in that spirit that Senegal launched an initiative in the Security Council on the issue of water, peace and security by convening, on 22 April 2016, an Arria Formula meeting on this issue under the auspices of His Excellency President Macky Sall, and, on 22 November 2016, an open debate on the same theme (see S/PV.7818). Through that initiative, supported by a preventive approach to hyrdodiplomacy, Senegal sought to sound the alarm in the Security Council about twenty-first century security challenges linked to shared water resources in the context of their increasing scarcity. My country wishes to see that resource shared in a peaceful, efficient, fair, and lasting manner. Peace and security throughout the world, particularly in Africa, with its 50 continental rivers and border lakes, depend on it.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Madam, and your entire team on the outstanding manner in which you are leading the Security Council this month.

I wish to welcome Secretary-General António Guterres and inform him that we are impressed by his leadership, his skills and his desire to ensure that 2017 is a year of peace in the United Nations. When Mr. Guterres assumed his post, President Evo Morales Ayma sent him a message in which he told him that

> "I share your concerns and commit myself to helping you in all your tasks aimed at building a peaceful world as the highest priority so that the current and future generations can enjoy a life free of conflict, war and intolerable unilateral interventions that only cause destruction and irreparable damage and claim innumerable victims, refugees and migrants".

Bolivia participates in today's debate as a plurinational State and country of Latin America and the Caribbean — a region in the process of resolving its last remaining armed conflict and which has declared itself free of nuclear weapons — and as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77. It participates as a country that has constitutionally declared itself a pacifist State that promotes the culture of peace and the right to peace, and that rejects all wars of aggression and as a territory with no foreign military bases.

There is a common understanding that the United Nations system should focus on the need to prioritize prevention and mediation in order to break the vicious circle of conflict. The report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) highlighted the primacy of policy and stated that lasting peace was possible with political solutions and not with military or technical engagement alone. We affirm the need to effectively and efficiently consolidate the Peacebuilding Commission, which takes full advantage of the benefits of its diverse membership. We also acknowledge the work done by the Commission since it began its activities in various countries on its agenda. We commend the swift progress of the Commission, in particular, in building on the principle of the national ownership of processes, the need for capacity-building and the recognition and indication of the importance of economic recovery and the development component in the process of building peace.

Dynamic partnerships with regional and subregional organizations must be established and strengthened. In addition, regional efforts should receive the necessary attention and support. We stress the need to have integrated, coherent peacebuilding strategies and programmes that are in line with the strategies and programmes of host countries in order to ensure national ownership. We are concerned about the fragmentation among the various intergovernmental organizations in the area of peace and security. Each of them is a piece of the peacebuilding puzzle and such fragmentation has been a significant hindrance to peace operations on the ground where peacebuilding occurs.

We agree with the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that efforts should continue in order to strengthen and take full advantage of the capacity of the United Nations in areas such as conflict prevention, negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, judicial settlement and, of course, the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, inter alia, the rule of law and peacekeeping and peacebuilding to assist with effective conflict prevention and peaceable resolution of protracted conflicts. In addition, the strengthening of cooperation and coordination links among United Nations organs, as well as the balance that should be maintained among them, are essential.

The Security Council should not encroach upon the domain or usurp the functions of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council or the Economic and Social Council. At times, the Security Council suffers from bipolar disorder. The Margarita Declaration of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries states that the Security Council has been too hasty in threatening or authorizing the use of force in some cases and has remained silent and inactive in others. We must reiterate and stress that the work of the Security Council should be carried out with commitment and respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity, territorial integrity, non-interference in countries' internal affairs and equality of all States.

My remarks refer to the architecture of our Organization and the Council's work. Nonetheless, we would be dishonest if we did not acknowledge that the United Nations architecture depends on other structures that have a direct link to and have caused such conflicts. It is our duty to change those structures. Let me share a brief story written by Eduardo Galeano, a Latin American born in Uruguay. He wrote:

> "Pastor Miguel Brun told me that some years ago he was with Indians from the Paraguayan Chaco. He was part of an evangelizing mission. The missionaries visited a cacique who was renowned for being very wise. The cacique, who was rotund and reserved, listened intently to the religious propaganda that was read to him in the language of the Indians. When the reading was finished, the missionaries waited. The cacique took his time. He said, 'It scratches. It scratches a lot and very well'. Then he said, 'but it scratches where it does not itch.'"

The conflict prevention, mediation, reconciliation or judicial settlement efforts that we make at the highest level will not be sufficient if we do not address the structural and root causes of the conflicts or, scratch where it itches. We are living in a very interesting era of transformation, with certainties, such as the leadership of our Secretary-General and uncertainties. What will be under threat in the coming months and years? Multilateralism, a system of checks and balances that allows problems to be resolved peaceably, is under threat. We must acknowledge that we living in an era of change that will have a direct impact, not only on the relevance of our Organization or on multilateralism as such, but also on global conflict.

Let me read a quote from a recent analysis given by the Vice-President of my country, Álvaro García Linera, on the world in which we live today. He said:

> "In today's world, neoliberal globalization is the ultimate goal — a political, ideological objective capable of channelling collective hope for a common future that would meet all of the possible expectations of well-being. However, that goal has been shattered into a thousand pieces. Now, there is nothing that exists to replace it that can articulate such expectations. There is now a fearful focus on our own borders and a return of a type of political tribalism fuelled by xenophobic rage in a world that now belongs to no one; a return to protectionist States and, if possible, States surrounded by walls, along with a global malaise that will result in the destruction of working- and middle-class economies caused by the global free market".

Against that backdrop, what are the structural threats to maintaining international peace and security? The first threat is interventionism. We wonder whether or not we would be witnessing the grave situation in the Middle East and North Africa if it had not been for interventionism — the unilateral policy that violates United Nations principles governing regime change? Would we be seeing today's conflicts had it not been for neocolonialism and the back-door policies of areas of influence and related to the way in which the world was divided? Perhaps the fact that one State, the United States of America, has declared itself exceptional and indispensable is not a threat to international peace and security. And what about other States? Are we not indispensable too? The vision of a First World and a Third World is a fallacy. There is only one world and the threat of climate change is a genuine one, which means that we have common but differentiated responsibilities. The fight against climate change is the same fight for the rights of Mother Earth.

Without a doubt, inequality is another major threat to international peace and security. A recent Oxfam report states that nearly 50 per cent of global wealth is concentrated in 1 per cent of the population. That is a threat to international peace and security. But not just that: the ownership of wealth is in the hands of transnational corporations, and unfortunately the United Nations has failed to internationally regulate the influence of transnationals.

Also, in order to understand the threats of conflict to peace and international security, we have to ask ourselves who owns the natural resources, as the Secretary-General has said. Is not the dispute over who owns natural resources that is the real cause of many conflicts? And who holds the reins of the financial system? How many domestic or international conflicts have been caused by the current architecture of the financial system? What is the relation of the external debt and conflict in the countries of the South? Is it not true that the military strength concentrated in just a few Powers — with their outrageous military spending and their nuclear weapons, which are one of the greatest dangers to the survival of the planet — is a threat to international peace and security? Is it not also a threat to international security that technology, knowledge and science are in the hands of just a few?

The United Nations, as we all know, is not a club in which to have a good time. It is the most important and indispensable forum for solving those problems. The best way to keep our Organization relevant is to transform it, to revolutionize it.

Allow me to conclude my statement by reiterating that we, the peoples of the United Nations, are here, as our Charter states, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war that has brought untold sorrow to humankind.

The President: There has been significant interest in today's debate, and I have a lengthy list of speakers. I hope that this indicates a strong interest in Member States to reposition prevention and peace, placing it at the heart of the work of the United Nations, and to express their support for multilateralism as well as for the new Secretary-General.

In order for all Member States that wish to take the floor to have an opportunity to do so, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes so that the Council can carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I would also add that, although it is sparsely used in the Security Council, applause is actually not prohibited.

I also wish to inform all concerned that we will be carrying on this open debate right through the lunch hour, as we have a very large number of speakers.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Waszczykowski (Poland): I am honoured to address the Security Council at this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I would like to thank you, Madam President, for convening this timely debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for outlining his vision for a renewed focus on conflict prevention.

In recent years, we have witnessed a number of increasingly complex and protracted conflicts and, at the very same time, probably the worst humanitarian crises since the end of Second World War. Given the particularly fragile security landscape in many regions of the world, we have to acknowledge that efforts aimed at resolving existing conflicts are not enough. To ensure durable and equitable peace for all, it is imperative that the international community identify and tackle the root causes of conflicts in a more accurate and timely manner.

I therefore deeply believe that conflict prevention should remain at the core of United Nations activities to maintain peace and security around the world. Despite the progress that has been made in the field, the multiplication of conflicts and crises in the course of the past 20 years clearly shows that prevention remains critically underprioritized. That has to change in order to allow conflict prevention to surface as a priority tool in various United Nations policies and strategies dealing with conflicts worldwide.

As one of the founding Members of the United Nations, Poland has been involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1953. Since then, more than 70,000 Blue Helmets from Poland have served in diverse United Nations missions — from the shores of Haiti, where Polish soldiers helped to rebuild a nation, to the heights and deserts of the Middle East, to the Balkans, where Polish Prime Minister and United Nations human rights envoy Tadeusz Mazowiecki urged the international community to stop the horrifying ethnic cleansing and human rights violations taking place there.

Poland has always been committed to bringing assistance to those seeking reconciliation and the restoration of peace. Driven by the universal values of peace, stability and prosperity, which lie at the core of Poland's foreign policy, my country does not want to be considered a simple consumer of security, but as a reliable security provider. Currently, we are making efforts to increase our participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Conflicts can, and should be, prevented or mitigated by early, well-suited political and diplomatic engagement. In that context, we deeply believe that the Security Council has a critical role to play in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. One of the reasons we are gathered here at today's open debate is our common willingness to address the question: How can the Security Council fully capitalize on opportunities for preventive action? Accordingly, I would like to highlight some areas where Poland believes progress and attention are particularly needed.

First, we believe that the Security Council already possesses appropriate prevention tools for effective action, but it is vital that those tools be used more often. Horizon-scanning briefings by the Secretariat, interactive dialogues, video teleconferences, and briefings by the Department of Political Affairs not only can contribute to the earlier recognition of warning signs, but also facilitate taking action before those signs deteriorate into open conflict.

Secondly, we think that the Security Council's visiting missions should take prevention aspects into consideration in a more effective way. With reference to the regional dimension, Poland highly values the dedicated work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The Working Group fulfils its mission and ensures continued thematic focus on emerging situations prior to the Council's consultations or formal meetings. We would like to strongly advocate using such tools more frequently and the broadening of their scope to encompass other regions of the world.

Finally, Poland believes that the Security Council should not be hampered by the use of the veto in taking action aimed at stopping or preventing situations involving war crimes or crimes against humanity.

Conflict prevention is an activity of a truly comprehensive nature. First, it requires the involvement of a wide range of actors — not only national, regional or subregional actors, but also different components of the whole United Nations system. In that regard, we fully support the actions of the United Nations Development Programme aimed at supporting national dialogue processes, local peace committees and confidence-building measures. In addition, we reiterate our strong support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

We are also convinced that the United Nations needs better and more coherent coordination of work among the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and various United Nations missions in the field. In that context, we believe that enhanced consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries would contribute to the adoption of a responsive stance towards unstable, peace-threatening conditions. Moreover, I would like to underline that conflict prevention requires a cross-pillar and cross-sectoral approach. A coherent implementation strategy across the human rights, peace and security and sustainable development spheres is essential.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of effective national conflict-prevention policies based on activities such as strengthening the transparency and accountability of State institutions, fighting corruption and promoting good governance. Good governance in pre- and post-conflict settings is one of the crucial factors that help to defuse tensions and prevent escalation.

Finally, we have to remember that all United Nations activities undertaken to maintain international peace and security, such as conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding, need to go hand in hand. Those activities cannot be undertaken in isolation, but must be part of a truly comprehensive approach aimed at ensuring the development of what Secretary-General Guterres described in his visionary statement as the "peace continuum".

As I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, Poland welcomed the Secretary-General's declaration, which highlighted conflict prevention as one of his priorities. We believe that, through mediation, good offices and shuttle diplomacy, the Secretary-General can alleviate tensions and foster peaceful relations between States. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Secretariat also plays a significant role in the process, as it can bring both early warning and in-depth analysis of emerging crises to the Security Council for its attention.

We need to acknowledge that the maintenance of international peace requires both bold decisions and concerted actions. I therefore call for the enhanced responsibility of all actors involved in the process. Policy makers, representatives of civil society, experts and the media should set all possible wheels in motion to strengthen our current "peace" diplomacy. We should jointly endeavour to ensure that every activity in the field is based on a solid and realistic perspective.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Rinkēvičs (Latvia): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this very important debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. My congratulations and best wishes go to the Swedish presidency and for your membership in the Security Council. My best wishes also go to Secretary-General Guterres. He can count on Latvia's support.

The United Nations was created because the world had paid too high a price for the absence of a credible international system. However, the potential of the United Nations for preventing the outbreak, continuation or resurgence of conflicts has not been used effectively. Far too often the United Nations has been unable to prevent conflicts, build peace or stop atrocities. All too often resources have been spent on responding to and managing crises instead of preventing them.

In 2017, many complex violent conflicts around the globe persist. All of those conflicts not only threaten the principles of the international order and the global rules-based system, they also fundamentally affect the security of our world. Most importantly, those conflicts have a devastating impact on millions of civilians. All recent reviews of the United Nations' peace and security pillar call for the strengthening of preventive diplomacy. The United Nations must develop an effective culture of prevention. Tools for prevention have long been available, including in the Charter of the United Nations. We need to move from mere commitment to concrete action — individually and collectively as the international community.

I appreciate the Secretary-General's energetic engagement today and his vision for a more effective United Nations. I would like to thank him personally for placing conflict prevention at the centre of the United Nations agenda. In that context, we look forward to the implementation of his initiatives announced on 3 January that will enhance the United Nations performance in the peace and security pillar, and will strengthen the arrangements for information and crisis management. The success of his strong appeal for peace from his first day in office largely depends on all of us. We expect that he will use all the tools at his disposal to preserve the rules-based international order and to restore it where it has been broken.

The best way of preventing conflicts is to solve existing ones in the most efficient way. All Member States of the United Nations are the guardians of this international system and the Charter of the United Nations. Member States of the Security Council have a particular responsibility. With the privilege of being a permanent member of the Council and having the veto power also comes the responsibility to use that power in the interests of common peace and security. The Council has not always lived up to that special responsibility.

In the case of Syria, the Council has not been and is not able to stop the State from committing crimes against its own population. The failure to act promptly to prevent or stop the conflict and to demand accountability has brought with it immense human costs. The brutal horrors of five years of the ongoing bloodshed in Syria haunt our consciences as human beings and diplomats.

Accountability is an essential part of any political, reconciliation and peace process in Syria. In the framework of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Latvia strongly supported the creation of the

International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Those Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011, contained in resolution 71/248, which seeks to assist the investigation and prosecution of the serious crimes committed in Syria and to ensure justice for all victims. Latvia has also called for referring the case of Syria to the International Criminal Court, which the Council has been unable to do. I repeat that call now.

Through the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States have committed to the renunciation of the illegal threat or use of force, and to settling their disputes by peaceful means. In the case of Ukraine, the Council was not able to prevent and stop the act of aggression, which triggered the commission of further crimes. Russia's actions in Ukraine are a blatant violation of international law and pose a serious challenge to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We must return to the former rules-based security order in Europe. The peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, one that respects Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity, must be a priority.

In order to maintain international peace and to ensure that the United Nations remains an organization in which people trust and believe, Security Council members must move beyond their domestic interests in the name of genuinely addressing global challenges. We must also further strengthen early warning measures. In that regard, the respect for international law, the protection of human rights and the rule of law are key.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Koenders (Netherlands): First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, and Sweden on its membership in the Security Council and for immediately taking the initiative to hold this important debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I also congratulate the other newly elected members of the Council: Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Italy. I am happy to be here together with my colleague Mr. Alfano, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, who has already made reference to the Italian-Dutch cooperation in the context of our split term in the Council. I fully support the statement delivered by Mr. Alfano on behalf of Italy, and we also do so in the spirit of European cooperation.

We welcome Sweden's initiative to organize this debate. It comes at a pivotal moment in time, a moment of major geopolitical upheaval and competition, dubbed a "tipping point". It is a moment when history seems to cast doubt over the Charter's promise of peace just when it is needed more than ever before, for instance, in Syria, Yemen and South Sudan. It is a moment when I think the citizens of all those countries feel forgotten and do not understand why more action is not undertaken to assist them and promote their interests in the Council as well. Moreover, in countries like my own, people want to see concrete results.

At this moment in time, it is up to us all to lay the groundwork for a reinvigorated multilateralism, for a coalition of States from all regions that can effectively relink effectiveness and legitimacy, thereby enabling the United Nations to be "fit for purpose" for this new era again. That means an Organization equipped and ready for action at all stages of a conflict, as the Secretary-General mentioned in his briefing. It also means putting prevention up front. The entire United Nations system, as well as Member States, should develop a prevention-up-front mindset and action mode.

Previously, I have likened the United Nations to an orchestra which, at times, sounds shrill and somewhat out of tune. Indeed, we have not always been able to play the music the way it was meant in the original score, that is the Charter. Why is that so? It is certainly not because the United Nations is just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time. On the contrary, the professionalism of the United Nations workforce is beyond any doubt. That includes, first and foremost, our new top-level conductor — the new Secretary-General, whose credentials and dedication are beyond any doubt. Neither is it because the necessary elements for a perfect performance are not there.

On the contrary, the potential of the unique and rich United Nations toolbox, all United Nations organizations, funds and programmes combined, working globally and across the entire spectrum of issues — from climate to development, disarmament, peace and security — is enormous. Together they can truly perform miracles, and they have on many occasions. The examples are there. Let us consider Liberia, where the United Nations mission and the development and peacebuilding organizations work together seamlessly under the strong vision and leadership of the country itself.

But United Nations organizations do not always coordinate as closely as they should. I did not come here to point fingers. My own experience has shown me how complicated it can be. We have seen different degrees of success in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and elsewhere. But let us make one thing clear — we have to be explicit about what we want, our goals and ours means, and we must translate our words into action. We should also learn from these cases.

The different pillars of the United Nations system can work better together. We have said that for many years. Whether there is an imminent crisis to be contained, fragile peace to be sustained, or preventive action has to be taken — for lasting peace, it is necessary that all the United Nations organizations work in concert. When they work together with one goal in mind there are results on the ground. They can each have their own comparative advantage and yet still deliver as one. I am glad, therefore, that the Secretary-General has put forward a concrete agenda for the implementation of the sustaining peace resolutions. We support him wholeheartedly in his efforts to streamline and de-silo the United Nations peace architecture. I would like to stress four points here.

First, we are glad to see that the most recent quadrennial comprehensive policy review gave the Secretary-General the mandate to shake up the development section of the orchestra. That will be vital for the concrete implementation by countries of essential agendas set out by his predecessor — the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the Secretary-General said, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is a key prevention tool, and we could not agree more. The Sustainable Development Goals are instruments not only for inclusion but also of peace, making it possible to address structural weaknesses well before people see no other alternative but violence. And in my view, that requires looking much more precisely at country-specific analysis and conflict dynamics and bottlenecks. Here also, the silo mentality is hindering us. It is up to all of us — Member States, donors and the Secretary-General alike — to hold these parts of the system accountable and to give the Secretary-General the time necessary to carry out those reforms. Only one criterion remains: results on the ground in each country, for the people.

Secondly, the proposed strengthening of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General as a centre for effective strategic conflict analysis and planning is an important step, especially in a time of regionalization and internationalization of internal conflicts in a very violent way. An empowered core group of United Nations decision makers across the system will help guide the system as a whole, develop strategies to deal more effectively with imminent crises, and play a coordinating role in the prevention of violent conflict. It could help bring preventive diplomacy back up front, where it should be, based on objective norms — as was mentioned by a number of representatives — and build trust in the key role of the Council and the Secretary-General. And of course, the responsibility to protect and to end impunity, as norms that we have put forward, should obviously be analysed in an objective manner.

Thirdly, the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism of the former Secretary-General successfully generated national strategies and United-Nations-led capacity-building support. The Office of the Secretary-General catalysed global efforts to prevent violent extremism. The Global Counter-Terrorism Forum is a case in point. We kindly ask our new Secretary-General to continue to remind us that the prevention of violent extremism is the only truly strategic answer to the horrors of worldwide terrorism working in the social fabric of our societies.

Fourthly, a deadlocked Council does not mean the United Nations has to be broken winged. In situations where the Council does not act, the Secretary-General can still employ his good offices and other tools to foster mediation and dialogue between the parties in emerging crises. This has happened in the past. The often discrete and behind-closed-doors efforts of the Secretariat made a huge contribution in countries like Nigeria, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Nepal. I believe that the new Secretary-General can build on that and continue to play that important role using his vast experience. The Secretary-General needs our support in that respect. We should strengthen the Mediation Support Office and United Nations early-warning capacity at the local level as well. The United Nations regional offices have done essential work behind the scenes to prevent conflicts. The work of Said Djinnit is a case in point; I believe that, to a large extent, he prevented a civil war in Conakry, Guinea, two years ago.

Preventive diplomacy up front means the Security Council should also play its part. It has done so successfully in the past, as is illustrated by the situation in many countries. In that respect the Council's early engagement was helpful. Now, however, the Council needs to maintain its engagement in order to secure a positive outcome. That also requires the proactive use by the Secretary-General and others of Article 99 of the Charter. Visits to countries and missions allow the Council to gather first-hand information and to support peace, mediation and peacebuilding processes. We welcome the Council's more frequent use of visits. The recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a case in point.

In our view, a stronger compact is needed in that orchestra between the Security Council and the Secretary-General when it comes to sustaining peace. They can combine their respective responsibilities and act more in unison — in joint approaches or consultations, including with regional actors. In our view, greater use could also be made of the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission. That could include inviting them to brief on specific situations. The same goes for the instrument of international contact groups, which is useful in the event that a country is identified as a potential site of crisis. That could be supported further, if possible, by benign neighbouring countries and the relevant regional organizations.

Lastly, there is deterrence. Much of conflict prevention focuses on dialogue. However, prevention is not only about carrots. Sometimes, as Theodore Roosevelt advised, it is a question of speaking softly but carrying a big stick. It is part of the toolbox. The Security Council has seldom made use of the most coercive measures to prevent conflict; but we cannot completely avoid it.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm the continued support of my country in the implementation of the agenda for prevention. In today's volatile world, our global orchestra is not short of tour dates. We should be better prepared to play the full symphony together. Although it will not be easy, we should start rehearsing to achieve the true sound of lasting peace, in concert. We will only get there if we all start putting prevention up front. The Netherlands stands ready to do its part.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Rwanda and Member of President Kagame's Cabinet.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): At the outset, I would like to commend you, Madam President, and your delegation for the excellent manner in which the delegation of Sweden has prepared this open debate. It was a fully inclusive process that allowed all delegations, through the timely circulation of documents, to prepare early. We truly appreciate that.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his briefing. His briefing and decision to place conflict prevention and sustaining peace at the centre of the United Nations mission are a testimony to his commitment to make conflict prevention a reality. Indeed, today's debate is about our ability to deliver on our collective promise, which was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations more than 70 years ago, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Despite that promise, however, conflicts have been not only persistent and relapsing.

Today, there is a continued inability of our Organization to credibly and accurately predict, pre-empt and/or rapidly respond to conflicts. Nevertheless, increasing discussions of this nature and the decision to put this debate at the forefront of the Security Council's agenda for this year raise hope for the possibility of reducing the number of missed opportunities in the future. While today's threats to peace have become more complex, with intricate new trends and types, more room for multilateral and multifaceted actions against those threats have also emerged, including partnering and working with regions through existing partnerships.

In Africa, experience in conflict prevention has shown that the African Union has on several occasions been better positioned in terms of knowledge, proximity and the capability to mobilize and respond quickly. Moreover, that ability often enables us to circumvent some of the burdensome, procedural processes of United Nations interventions. We therefore believe that the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union could be a collaboration framework through which conflict prevention in Africa can be discussed and from which practical measures can be taken.

In their solemn declaration adopted in Addis Ababa in May 2013, when African Heads of State embraced Agenda 2063, African leaders, inter alia, expressed their determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa and pledged not to bequeath the burdens of conflicts to the next generation of Africans. They also undertook the goal of ending all wars in Africa by 2020. Conflict prevention is therefore, as we speak here today in the Security Council, the primary priority of the African Union. It is through that road map that the

Security Council could collaborate closely with Africa in order to effectively contribute to conflict prevention on the continent through practical steps. Allow me to highlight some of the steps that we suggest.

First, the international community should engage in strategic dialogues with Africa, including in the United Nations system, on global policies and practices that negatively impact Africa and its people. In our view, the holding of regular dialogues between the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council on the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts at all levels, as well as on other strategic issues, is of prime importance. We believe that increased cooperation between these two peace and security bodies would enhance complementarity and lead to effective coordination, while at the same time minimizing the duplication of efforts.

Secondly, we believe that shifting attention in addressing the underlying causes of conflicts, while at the same time increasing the capacity to streamline efforts to intervene when civilians are endangered, including the ability to recognize and disseminate the signs of impending or potential conflict, would increase our collective preventive capabilities and help the United Nations live up to its full potential. We believe that early warning and response capabilities are critical requirements for effective early prevention.

Thirdly, linked to that is the implementation of outstanding components of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the full operationalization of the African Standby Force.

Fourthly, in order to achieve a conflict-free continent, we should also seek to address the illicit inflow of arms and weapons into Africa, with a focus on stopping suppliers and recipients of such weapons from promoting and sustaining illicit business in arms and weapons.

Last but not least, we need to ensure that our post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding capabilities are properly deployed in order to ensure the institutional capacities that prevent relapses into conflict. On that point in particular, let me say that as a member of the African Union Peace and Security Council and a major contributor of peacekeeping troops, Rwanda pledges its full support for putting conflict prevention at the centre of United Nations action.

Allow me to say a few words on sustaining peace. As we all know, Rwanda would be a different country today if the post-genocide Government had not invested in forging a new Rwanda, if it had not been successful in ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities for all its citizens, if it had not overcome divisions, if it had not engaged reconciliation and restorative justice, and if it had not worked to build trust in State institutions. That alone is an indication of every State's primary responsibility in conflict prevention, including creating an environment that is conducive to the enjoyment of human rights and success in promoting and protecting rights and ensuring accountability for their violation.

It is our hope that this year, which is starting with such a central and critical debate, will mark a turning point as we embark on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which provide concrete ways to sustain peace and development and, as the Secretary-General put it, to make them a key prevention tool.

Mr. Choi Jong-moon (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I wish to express my best wishes to the new members of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Swedish presidency for selecting the topic of "Conflict prevention and sustaining peace" for today's debate.

My special appreciation goes to Secretary-General António Guterres for his informative briefing at his first address to the Council.

We are at a critical moment vis-à-vis the international security landscape. The nature of today's global conflicts has become increasingly complex and intractable, while terrorism and violent extremism are spreading to each and every corner of the world. In turn, that has created the worst humanitarian situation of our time, which calls for a new way forward.

At a time of such global turbulence, it is significant that the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted landmark resolutions last year, laying out a road map towards a more peaceful future by welcoming a new vision of sustaining peace. That entails taking down the fragmentation and duplication that are prevalent across the United Nations system, while pursuing a holistic approach that integrates peace and security, human rights and development. It reflects the renewed awareness that conflict prevention should be the centrepiece of all the United Nations engagements. In this connection, Korea welcomes the Secretary-

General's strong emphasis on prevention as a guiding raison d'être of his stewardship of the Organization from the very outset of his term, in particular his outlining a surge in diplomacy for peace.

It is no coincidence that all three of the recent global reviews on peace and security, including the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, highlighted the essential role of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The Secretariat has made some progress in implementing the recommendations of these reviews, but more needs to be done to make United Nations peace operations fit for purpose. In striving for a way forward to close the implementation gap and to advance the international community's capacity to effectively prevent conflicts and sustain peace, Korea recommends the following.

First, the Council should make better use of its investigatory tools under Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations. Secondly, the Council should implement and continue to build on the language in its resolutions 2086 (2013) and 2333 (2016), which specifies the Council's role in peacebuilding efforts. Thirdly, greater engagement with the Ad hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa could facilitate action on potential conflicts. And last but not least, the Council must make more proactive use of the advisory function of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC).

In fact, Korea is expected to become the next Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. In this new capacity, Korea hopes to contribute to securing sustainable peace across the globe in a constructive way. Korea is of the view that scaling-up inclusive capacity-building and greater coordination through PBC initiatives are effective means to prevent conflicts and sustain peace. Enhanced coordination between the Council and the PBC is essential in this regard.

As the Council is well aware, over the past decades, the Republic of Korea, together with the Council, has been making all-out efforts to prevent the nuclear programme of North Korea and thereby achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. However, even at this moment, while we are gathered in this Chamber to discuss ways to secure sustainable peace, North Korea continues to develop its nuclear and missile capabilities, blatantly violating relevant Security Council resolutions. It is critical that the Council continue to be engaged with this issue to sustain peace in this region.

In conclusion, as the presumptive next Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Korea will work closely with the Council, Member States and other partners to create a platform whereby the United Nations can effectively sustain peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Thailand.

Ms. Ganjanarintr (Thailand): I am honoured to speak on behalf of 10 States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my own country, Thailand.

ASEAN congratulates the new non-permanent members of the Council and wishes them success throughout their terms. We also welcome the presence of the new Secretary-General. ASEAN will render him our full support and close cooperation in the fulfilment of his mandates. We thank Sweden for organizing this debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, one of the most pressing issues in maintaining international peace and security.

As embodied in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASEAN is a people-centred, rules-based and peace-loving community. We adhere to the principles of international law governing the peaceful conduct of relations among States, including refraining from the threat of the use of force, of inclusivity and responsiveness, which ensure our peoples enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms, and of tolerance in the spirit of unity in diversity. ASEAN believes in a comprehensive approach to security that addresses existing and emerging challenges in a timely manner, and in resolving differences and disputes by peaceful means while strengthening confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the ASEAN Bangkok Declaration, which established ASEAN to promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For the ASEAN community, maintaining and enhancing peace, security and stability and further strengthening peace-oriented values in the region is one of the most important purposes of the Organization, as reflected in the ASEAN Charter. Without peace, security and stability, it would be difficult to attain other important goals of the ASEAN community. Therefore, conflict prevention and sustaining peace remain one of the most fundamental of ASEAN's priorities since its establishment in 1967.

ASEAN-led platforms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the East Asia Summit, have provided venues for regular dialogue on political and security-related matters in the Asia-Pacific region since 1994 and continue to play a central role in the regional stability architecture.

For ASEAN, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Goal 16 regarding peace and justice, can serve as important guidelines for conflict prevention efforts. Building resilient inclusive societies and a development agenda that addresses the root causes of the conflict and that provides economic opportunities in post-conflict communities are key factors that lead to sustaining peace.

ASEAN has a comprehensive approach to promoting traditional and non-traditional security in the region. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, the ASEAN community is working together to provide political, economic and social security for all member States. We are a region of diversity, but we are striving to build our strengths based on our common interests and mutual understanding, which is the best way to prevent conflict.

Beyond our region, ASEAN member States are active contributor to United Nations peace operations worldwide. Under the framework of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting/ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus, ASEAN Member States have pledged to enhance cooperation in peacekeeping through the ASEAN peacekeeping centres network. The ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation is also a valuable contribution to conflict prevention and sustaining global peace.

All these actions are consistent with the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and related blueprints, which ASEAN adopted in 2015, and our regional commitments under the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia. They are also in line with the 2016-2020 Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations, where we look forward to the continued development of an effective partnership with the United Nations to enhance our capabilities in preventive diplomacy and post-conflict peacebuilding.

It is ASEAN's view that the Council and the Secretary-General should work closely to make conflict prevention and sustaining peace a reality. Regular dialogues should be promoted to ensure that all views are heard and that a swift and coordinated response to emergency situations is implemented. We encourage the new Secretary-General and Council members, as well as other relevant United Nations organs, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to continue to enhance cooperation to promote coherence and complementarity between United Nations peace and security efforts and development. To this end, ASEAN fully supports the efforts to create synergies and multiply positive impacts laid out in previous United Nations milestones, such as the 2015 reviews of the United Nations peace and security architecture.

Considering the role of regional organizations as stipulated in Chapter 8 of the Charter of the United Nations, ASEAN's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security has been constructive and consistent with the spirit of that Chapter. We therefore encourage the United Nations to engage with regional organizations and all concerned parties at the earliest possible stage to address emerging threats.

In conclusion, ASEAN believes that strong political will, robust leadership and sufficient resources must be consistently provided to ensure that peace is sustained and conflict does not erupt, escalate or relapse.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Sipiläinen (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation and its two co-Chairs first.

I would like to congratulate Sweden on organizing this very timely debate. We also welcome the fact that the Secretary-General as been present with us today.

The Group of Friends of Mediation brings together 44 United Nations States Members from various regions and eight international and regional organizations. With a broad representative capacity, the Group has made a significant contribution to the efforts to increase international awareness on mediation. In addition to its other activities, the Group of Friends of Mediation has initiated four General Assembly resolutions on mediation, which were adopted by consensus. The resolutions have contributed to strengthening the framework of mediation and the mediation-support functions of the United Nations, as well as the development of the mediation capacities of various mediation actors, while encouraging them to use the Guidance for Effective Mediation. The resolutions have also encouraged enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

The most recent General Assembly resolution (resolution 70/304) on mediation, adopted in September 2015, recognized the contribution made by the 2015 reviews of the United Nations peace and security architecture, in particular their attention to the importance of conflict prevention and sustaining peace, including the use of mediation. It acknowledged the good offices of the Secretary-General and the importance of seeking long-term, inclusive political solutions for sustaining peace.

Taking into account increasing humanitarian concerns and needs on the global level and specific to many regions, the 2016 ministerial breakfast meeting of the Group of Friends of Mediation provided an opportunity to discuss how best to respond to the call for global leadership to prevent and end conflicts, as highlighted in the report (A/71/353) of the Secretary-General on the Outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit. The Group of Friends of Mediation strongly believes that strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, and sustaining peace, is a cost-effective tool for the United Nations in its work towards peace and security. We also acknowledge the need to empower more women to serve as mediators. For that, sustained political support, coherence, cooperation, systematic efforts and adequate resources will be needed. The Group of Friends of Mediation welcomes the new Secretary-General's commitment to advance diplomacy for peace and stands ready to support his work and efforts that strengthen the role of mediation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and sustaining peace.

I would also like to make several remarks in my national capacity. Finland aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

Let me again thank Sweden for this debate, because the time to improve the United Nations ability to prevent conflicts more effectively is now. The Security Council, the Secretary-General and all Member States must grasp this momentum and turn it into concrete action. I am very pleased to see that the Secretary-General has already taken a proactive role in the area of conflict prevention and shown great initiative with his recent decisions on improving the United Nations performance.

The three reviews — on peace operations, peacebuilding, and women and peace and security — and their concrete implementation can truly transform the United Nations peace and security sector. Recommendations from the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) continue to be valid and should be implemented without delay. Securing solid funding for both the primacy of politics and the sustaining peace agenda, including mediation and special political missions, are of high importance. Equally important is for Member States to support and contribute to peacekeeping, as it is a central element of the United Nations peace and security sector.

The Security Council, and the United Nations as a whole, needs to strengthen its own capacities to undertake prevention, including by conducting better horizon-scanning exercises, developing and making use of early-warning tools, better assessing the root causes of conflicts and addressing them in a timely manner, upholding universal human rights and leveraging sustainable development by implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Technology and innovations can help in that task. More efforts should also be invested in dialogue with those countries that are experiencing a fragile situation.

Finland wishes to see mediation as a tool for conflict prevention at the forefront of the United Nations work. Mediation and conflict prevention are the most cost-effective instruments to work towards peace. Finland's broad approach to mediation includes national dialogue and other formal and informal processes that contribute to more inclusive peace processes, and thereby to lasting solutions. We continue to support non-governmental actors, including religious and traditional leaders' engagement in peace processes. It is also time to recognize the value of United Nations special political missions. We, the Member States, should provide the political and financial support that they need.

We urge the Council and the Secretary-General to pay particular attention to the active role of women in conflict prevention. Women remain the single-greatest underutilized resource in more effective peacebuilding. Experience shows that empowering women and supporting their full and active participation in peace-related, political and economic decision-making can lead to more inclusive and lasting agreements.

The Security Council holds a special responsibility in conflict prevention. One concrete line of action to that end would be the commitment of all Council members to support timely and decisive action by the Council to prevent or end mass atrocities and to refrain from the use of the veto in those situations.

Finland continues to stand ready to support the Council and Secretary-General Guterres in strengthening the mutual partnership, as well as making conflict prevention the United Nations top priority.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Rücker (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union later today.

I thank Sweden for having initiated this timely and crucial debate, and I warmly welcome Secretary-General Guterres, wish him success and thank him for his resolve to put conflict prevention and peace first.

With regard to the United Nations and the Security Council's role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace, I would like to make three points.

First, sustaining peace is key. In 2016, the General Assembly and the Security Council adopted landmark resolutions (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly 70/262, respectively) that acknowledged that sustaining peace should be the goal of all national and international prevention policies, in order to end violence, guarantee sustainable development and allow for the protection of human rights. Sustaining peace necessitates a comprehensive approach and is a shared task and responsibility involving all the relevant stakeholders. That includes new partnerships, inter alia, with regional organizations — as has been mentioned — as well as with civil society. And it entails an inclusive approach in which all members of society, especially women, have a role to play. In that regard, resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, should guide our activities. The concept of a closely linked security, human rights and development agenda is also reiterated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reflected throughout Germany's chairmanship of the Group of 20 (G-20) in 2017. In February, the G-20 Foreign Ministers will therefore be discussing sustaining peace and possible contributions thereto. Sustaining peace should be our guide for the next decade.

Secondly, we need sound early warning and analysis. We need a factual and common understanding of the current crisis situations, their root causes and drivers. On the national level, Germany has invested heavily in conflict prevention and stabilization. We have reformed our internal structures to align with the realities of the twenty-first century, sharpened our analytical tools and refined our stabilization approach in crisis situations. We are currently developing new national guidelines on crisis prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding with the help of international organizations, all branches of Government, academia and civil society.

With a view to the United Nations, we strongly support Secretary-General Guterres's resolve to make the Organization more effective and more efficient. We hope that these and further changes will enable the United Nations to keep conflict prevention and peace as a top priority. We would also like to see the development of an integrated policy-planning capacity, stronger analytical capabilities and enhanced situational awareness at Headquarters as well as in the field. We hope for active engagement in scenario development and mediation throughout the entire United Nations system.

The Security Council should also prioritize prevention at every stage of conflict, focusing on reconciliation efforts, mediation, security-sector reform and good governance. For example, it could resume regular horizon-scanning sessions to discuss, prepare for and respond to emerging crisis situations. The Security Council should also continue its discussions on regional and thematic issues that can have a serious impact on peace and security, such as climate change and migration. Furthermore, the Security Council could capitalize more efficiently on work done in the United Nations system, for instance by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, as a wealth of information is there, or through the work of the United Nations on sustainable development. In particular, the

Security Council should interact more closely with the Peacebuilding Commission.

Thirdly, and lastly, we need to move from early warning to early action. While it is important to have the analysis and the structures right, none of this can bear fruit if we are not ready to invest in preventive tools. Germany is therefore committed to further strengthening the crisis-prevention capabilities and overall efforts of the United Nations.

In addition to being one of the largest contributors to the budget of the Organization, we also tripled our contribution in the field of prevention in 2016. For instance, we contributed more than $4 million to the United Nations Mediation Support Team and more than $20 million to the Peacebuilding Fund, and we have also increased our contributions to UN-Women.

On the ground, Germany is also actively engaged in crisis prevention and peacekeeping. For instance, our stabilization and peacekeeping efforts in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali support the political trajectory that will eventually define a sustainable settlement in Mali. We also encourage others to invest more in stabilization projects so that legitimate authorities in precarious situations may be able to sustain peace in their countries.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Germany's strong commitment to and support for the United Nations. Germany looks forward to working closely with the new Secretary-General and the Security Council to advance conflict prevention and sustain peace.

The President: We still have a very long list of speakers, and I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are again kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and the Swedish presidency of the Security Council for having organized this debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I should like also to welcome the Secretary-General, António Guterres, as this is the first time he is participating in a Security Council debate in that capacity, and to commend him for the leadership he has shown since his first day in office and the drive to reform and adapt the Organization to the demands of the twenty-first century.

This open debate is timely and takes place at a moment of transition in the United Nations. Brazil would like to echo the new Secretary-General's appeal for all of us to put peace first in this new year. To that end, prevention must come first, and calls to prevent conflict and sustain peace must be translated into concrete deeds.

As conflicts multiply and become more complex, the major weakness of the United Nations remains its inability to prevent conflicts. The best way to protect civilians, who are the main victims, is to focus primarily on prevention. Secretary-General Guterres accurately remarked that the United Nations was born from war and that we must now focus on peace. Not long ago, the United Nations went through a process of reviewing its activity with a view to adapting the Organization to the challenges faced regarding the maintenance of international peace and security. The recommendations contained in the three resulting reports hinged on one common element: the primacy of politics.

These documents highlight the fact that United Nations engagement needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that should also focus on conflict prevention. I wish to underscore in particular the findings of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, which paved the way for the notion of sustaining peace. This concept, enshrined in General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, encompasses the dimension of conflict prevention and marks an evolution in relation to the original paradigm of peacebuilding, which focused exclusively on countries emerging from conflict.

It has long been the Brazilian view that the United Nations engagement to promote peace and security should go beyond addressing the immediate causes and drivers of conflict, sending peacekeeping operations and providing aid relief. Strategies to sustain peace must also focus on the structural prevention of the outbreak of, or relapse into, conflict, including by fighting poverty, ensuring youth employment and gender equality, promoting socioeconomic development, building full-fledged institutions, and promoting national reconciliation, improved governance and more inclusive societies. These actions should be carried out in close coordination with national authorities and taking into account the priorities established and the need for national ownership at all stages. Without falling into the trap of securitizing development, enhanced coordination between the United Nations development system and the architecture to sustain peace should be pursued.

As for the steps to be taken to ensure more effective, complete prevention by the Security Council and across the wider United Nations system, Brazil is of the view that better coordination and cooperation between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding commission is needed. As we have stated on various occasions, Security Council members must take full advantage of the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and contribute to an improved United Nations engagement. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the review of the working methods of the Peacebuilding Commission, which calls for enhanced cooperation between these two bodies. The revised working methods foresee that in preparation for briefings of the Security Council, the Commission may consider visits to the fields, including, when invited by the Council, joint visits with the Security Council. It is our opinion that the Council would benefit from the long-term perspective of the Commission in those joint visits. Peacekeeping operations and special political missions should also adopt the long-term perspective required for sustaining peace.

On a more operational level, the Council could do more to prioritize prevention in its activities. Regular horizon-scanning exercises focused on potential hotspots and cross-cutting thematic concerns should be resumed. This can certainly be done in a way that helps to stave off conflict rather than stoke tensions. As for how to increase the focus on prevention, the incoming Secretary-General has rightly outlined the measures needed: address the root causes through a balanced approach to the three pillars of the United Nations. Such an endeavour will require enhanced coordination between the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General will also have an important role in preparing the report to be presented to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session on options to increase, restructure and better prioritize funding allocated to peacebuilding activities, including through assessed contributions. That should also be considered as we strive to strengthen special political missions, which have been doing important work to prevent and mediate conflict and to sustain peace, but lack the predictable and sizable financial support of peacekeeping operations.

In his New Year address, the Secretary-General rightly underscored that trillions of dollars are spent on waging war. Allow me to add that billions are also spent in peacebuilding operations worldwide. Resources should be more efficiently invested in strengthening the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and special political missions, which can play an invaluable role in prevention. As Ambassador Gert Rosenthal underscored in the report (see S/2015/490) of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, peacebuilding is an inherently political process. The Security Council and the General Assembly have already shown political will by agreeing on a framework for peace. We need a strategic plan for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016). I hope that the high-level event entitled "Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace", to be held on 24 January, will afford us an opportunity to demonstrate the renewed commitment of Member States, the United Nations and other stakeholders to building lasting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Mejía Vélez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate Minister Wallström and Sweden on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I also congratulate the other new members of the Council, namely, Kazakhstan, Italy, Ethiopia and Bolivia.

The convening of this open debate is very timely, as conflicts around the globe are increasingly complex and the United Nations faces new challenges that test its capacity to respond effectively and appropriately. Nevertheless, that is the current situation in 2017, as the Secretary-General rightly pointed out in his statement. Prevention is not simply a priority, but the priority. We have the benefit of the studies that have already been mentioned here on the peacebuilding architecture, on maintaining peace and, of course, on the issue of women and peace and security, all of which reaffirm the importance of focusing our efforts on prevention and the sustainability of peace.

In 2015, we adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the commitment to leaving no one behind, with a particular emphasis of combating the causes of many conflicts. We also have the resolve and the political will of the new Secretary-General, Mr. Guterres, as clearly evidenced by his plan of action and in what was reiterated this morning. Preventing conflict means strengthening institutions and building resilient societies, prioritizing national and international policies and protecting and empowering women and girls — one of the most important steps in sustainable development.

As is well known, my country is in the process of concluding what could be a peace agreement after more than 50 years. I want to share three relevant points that may be significant lessons learned.

The agreement is anchored in Chapter VI of the San Francisco Charter, as has been mentioned, and is the result of direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict, with the backing of the international community, the Security Council and, of course, the special political mission, as well as the resolute support of our regional body, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. The agreement addresses the causes of the conflict, and its implementation will enable us to generate economic development and well-being in the rural areas of Colombia that perhaps have not experienced development and Government involvement for many years because of the conflict. And, of course, as has been carefully considered in the Security Council, the case of Colombia shows that the help of international donors for the implementation of the agreements in their development components goes far beyond the resources of the special political mission that is now in the country, verifying and monitoring the ceasefire and disarmament.

Finally, the presence of women at the negotiation table and their contribution to the peace agreement and its future implementation as part of the women and peace and security agenda in Colombia is a truly unique experience in a peace process that specifically includes a gender perspective. As Minister Wallström said this morning, investing in prevention is not only morally correct, it is also smart, economically safe and sustainable.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mminele (South Africa): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the Kingdom of Sweden on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and we express our appreciation to you for convening this important and timely debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. We once again welcome the new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, and thank him for his informative briefing and vision on today's topic.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as the joint statement made by the representative of Finland on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation.

South Africa holds the view that, while we must, undoubtedly, seek to strengthen the tools at our disposal for addressing conflicts as they arise, we must also emphasize the preventive approach to addressing conflict and its root causes in order to prevent conflict and prevent countries emerging from conflict from relapsing into conflict. On his first day at the helm of the Organization, the Secretary-General called on all of us to resolve to put peace first. This debate, as the first open thematic debate of the Security Council this year, is therefore symbolic, as it places the emphasis on prevention and sustaining peace before moving to the task of resolving conflict once it occurs.

South Africa is convinced that global peace and stability will remain elusive if we do not address the nexus between security and development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that vital link. The nature of contemporary conflicts reveals that such conflicts are, to a large extent, precipitated by dispute-burdened economic development issues, including access to mineral resources, the disproportionate distribution of wealth and power, bad governance, the lack of people's participation in democratic processes, and corruption.

Sustainable peace consolidation also requires the strengthening of political approaches, such as efforts aimed at preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and management, mediation and peacebuilding. In that context, we must consider the report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which noted that peacebuilding

> "must be the principle that flows through all the United Nations engagements, informing all the Organization's activities — before, during and after violent conflicts — rather than being marginalized." (*S/2015/490, p. 3*)

We need to be aware that the under-resourcing of conflict prevention interventions remains an obstacle. South Africa believes that a commitment to sustaining peace and conflict prevention requires adequate and predictable resources in support of those priorities. That will invariably lead to less spending on costly interventions such as peacekeeping, humanitarian responses and the protection of developmental gains.

South Africa further welcomes and reaffirms its commitment to cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. That allows for consistency with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. As the United Nations has already recognized, regional organizations are well positioned to understand the causes of armed conflicts, owing to their knowledge of the region, which can strengthen their efforts to influence the prevention or resolution of those conflicts. Furthermore, they have a comparative advantage, owing to their increasing political resolve to address the situation. It would be beneficial for the United Nations to work closely with regional and subregional organizations in their mediation and peacemaking efforts.

In addition to traditional threats to international peace and security, the nature of conflict is changing, with a multiplicity of armed actors, many employing asymmetric methods. Against that background, the United Nations faces new challenges to its efforts to ensure peace and security, promote sustainable development, protect human rights and deliver humanitarian aid.

In conclusion, South Africa continues to recognize the importance of carrying out the recommendations of the reviews on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and on women and peace and security. In particular, we echo the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which noted that the prevention of conflict must be the priority, not the use of force, thereby stressing the need for both short-term prevention measures and longer-term measures to address the root causes and structural drivers of conflict.

The Security Council should not act as the proverbial man with the hammer. Instead, using all aspects of the Charter at the disposal of the United Nations system, including the good offices role of the Secretary-General, we must commit ourselves to doing everything we can to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): I speak on behalf of Colombia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, New Zealand and my own country, Norway. We are eight countries that came together early in 2015 to form a cross-regional group, the so-called UN70 Group, with a view to developing reform ideas for the United Nations. In November last year, we handed over a set of recommendations to the Secretary-General. One of the five key messages conveyed to Mr. Guterres was that he should strive to place conflict prevention at the heart of the United Nations peace and security agenda.

Last year, Member States agreed on the concept of sustaining peace in the landmark resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture (Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262). Sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development. That is quite an agenda. We need concerted efforts that involve the whole of the United Nations system and that include collaboration with national Governments and other key partners, such as international, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions, civil-society organizations, women's groups, youth organizations and the private sector.

The Security Council has a unique mandate and position. The Council has various means of preventing conflict at its disposal, as reflected in the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) for today's meeting. With opportunity comes responsibility. The United Nations system is in need of a renewal of its conflict prevention and conflict resolution mechanisms. We, the cross-regional UN70 Group, strongly urge the Security Council to use all the means at its disposal to prevent the emergence of new crises like those in Syria or South Sudan. The Security Council needs to work closely with our new Secretary-General, give him space to work proactively on preventive diplomacy and be willing to respond when the Secretary-General recommends action by the Council.

We are very pleased that the new Secretary-General will put conflict prevention at the very top of his agenda. We would like to see a greater proportion of resources allocated to that area, as well as a more coherent approach by the United Nations system to identifying and addressing conflict risks. We welcome the Secretariat's initiative to convene monthly situational awareness briefings for Council members, and we underscore the importance of the Secretary-General providing strong leadership to the Secretariat and the wider United Nations system.

The Security Council has a crucial role to play in conflict prevention. However, the Council cannot do it alone. We, the States Members of the United Nations, must come together and advance the sustaining peace agenda. National ownership is fundamental in order to achieve results. Preventing conflict and sustaining peace, with the assistance of the international community, does not undermine State sovereignty. On the contrary, it strengthens State sovereignty. The shift to prevention is not an opportunity, it is a necessity.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): Let me start by thanking Sweden for organizing today's open debate.

We endorse the Secretary-General's call to make 2017 a year of peace. That is urgent, given that new and complex conflicts are emerging, even as older, longer-standing and unresolved disputes continue to fester. We are in fact witnessing unprecedented human suffering caused by conflicts and violent upheaval. Entire regions are being destabilized, and millions of lives destroyed, by long drawn-out conflicts. Today's debate is therefore both timely and critical.

The United Nations responsibility for sustaining peace flows from the Charter's promise of the promotion of economic and social development for all peoples in larger freedom. That responsibility is in addition to the obligation for the maintenance of international peace and security. United Nations peacebuilding efforts must respect the fundamental principles of the Charter of theUnited Nations, including respect for the sovereignty and sovereign equality of States. Such efforts should be undertaken under a clear mandate from the Security Council and the General Assembly.

The United Nations capacity for sustaining peace is still relatively nascent. It has evolved in response to the growing number of conflicts across the world. The United Nations endeavours in nation-building have, however, had mixed results. Yet they have so far been more productive and cost effective than unilateral actions taken by some Powers.

Sustainable peace is a challenge and cannot be achieved unless the underlying causes of conflicts are addressed: poverty and, increasingly, environmental degradation; political and economic injustice; ethnic, tribal and religious tensions; and external interference and intervention. It also means finding solutions to longstanding political disputes. Political, security and development actors need to support each other in striving for sustainable peace. It is a comprehensive activity requiring holistic, long-term thinking that connects development, peace and security and human rights into an integrated approach. All our discussions from the past year have brought forth the understanding that sustaining peace entails a political process. It encompasses the prevention of the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.

Its core message is prevention. We believe that prevention should be taken as a task to be shared by national Governments and national stakeholders. Inclusive dialogue, mediation, accountable institutions, good governance, access to justice, gender equality and youth participation all feed into the processes of conflict prevention and, ultimately, sustainable peace. Inclusivity is the linchpin for sustaining peace.

When we look at sustainable peace through the lens of conflict prevention, it is important to shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. Effective preventive strategies rely on, first, early reaction to sign of trouble; secondly, efforts to alleviate the factors that trigger violence; and, thirdly, the resolution of the underlying root causes of violence. In all such processes, national ownership is essential. We believe that conflict prevention and mitigation are not generic. Moving a country towards durable peace begins with a clear understanding of the sources and nature of the local conflicts. Ambitious conflict-prevention strategies have to avoid the pitfalls of either a delayed reaction or an incorrect reading of the signs of an impending crisis.

The United Nations already has several instruments for conflict prevention. At present, the United Nations and regional organizations maintain dozens of good-offices missions in, or in proximity to, countries faced with significant risks of conflict. Existing conflict-prevention mechanisms, such as early-warning systems, are mostly designed to detect only imminent or recurring conflicts. The United Nations observer and peacekeeping missions should serve to provide a deeper understanding of potential conflicts and crises and act as early warning systems.

Finally, the United Nations cannot fulfil the role of sustaining peace and preventing conflict without adequate financial resources, the political support of Member States and efficient management and coordination by the various United Nations organs and entities concerned. Today's debate can contribute significantly to advancing such goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Sweden on joining the Security Council for a two-year mandate. I also congratulate the Swedish delegation on assuming the presidency of the Council this month. I would like to wish all States Members of the United Nations a year of peace and security, one in which our populations leave war and terrorism — terrorism that rages around the world — behind.

I would also like to thank Sweden for convening today's open debate on an important subject, namely, conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I would also like to congratulate the other new members of the Council — Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy and Kazakhstan. We wish them every success in the Council and in upholding the values of peace and security. I would also like to thank Spain for the excellent manner in which it presided over the Council last month.

Terrorism is carried out by international terrorist organizations such as Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front. It leads to instability and an absence of peace. It also leads to armed conflicts around the world. Da'esh and other terrorist groups having seized large areas of territory in Iraq, Syria and Libya, and have taken terrorism to a new level. They, along with other terrorist organizations, are attaining ever-greater capacity. They have powerful modern weapons and know the secrets of technology, which they make use of to gain supporters and recruit foreign terrorist fighters, as well as to propagate their extremist and violent ideology.

No country is immune from those dangers. Iraq remains in a state of war against all of those terrorist groups, which have gravely threatened peace in our country. Despite the process of reconstruction in our country, basic services have been in decline. Economic and social indicators, in particular on health care, are in free fall. Poverty is increasing. There are also waves of internal displacement. The number of casualties is growing. Terrorism has increased the feeling of insecurity and has led to upheaval. That, in turn, also impedes socioeconomic growth in our country. All of that has led to setbacks in the gains that have been made by our country in terms of sustainable development.

A functioning society is essential for peace and security. We must therefore leave behind all forms of violence and terrorism, as well as conflicts, traditional warfare and organized crime, in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Transparent democracy, the rule of law and good governance are the preconditions for a peaceful society. The only way to achieve a peaceful way of living is to create a context in which the various political currents can discuss how to change society. We also need the public to be able to participate in the decision-making process. The public should have access to the essential information that it needs. Indeed, the participation of the public is one of the pillars of a peaceful society. We need to end exclusion because that will allow us to combat financial and administrative corruption and strengthen development.

We can have sustainable peace only if there is consensus within our societies. With that in mind, my Government has adopted a range of legislative enactments to strengthen national unity and reinforce the trust of all of the Iraqi people. We are determined to continue our national project and create an environment that favours dialogue, which will allow us to strengthen the feeling of national ownership in a political process involving all of the national stakeholders, be they religious or ethnic. In that way, we will be able to maintain the security and stability of the country.

In conclusion, international efforts to help Iraq in its fight against terrorism can be seen as part of our collective responsibility to address terrorism at the international level. Aware of the danger that local terrorism can cross borders, our activities now reach beyond the national to the continental level. That is how we will contribute to maintaining international peace and security.

More than ever, Iraq requires the support of the international community to help to rebuild cities that have been liberated, ensure stability and allow internally displaced persons to return to their homes. We also need to mitigate the effects of the war against terrorism around the world. Furthermore, we encourage all countries to respect the Security Council resolutions on the fight against terrorism and to cut off the sources of terrorist financing.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Hungary.

Ms. Bogyay (Hungary): I have learned from a fantastic woman in Northern Ireland, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Betty Williams, that peace is action, not words. That is what she said, and that is how she worked. Hungary supports the concept of the year of peace and is ready to act for peace.

I wish to thank Sweden for convening this important open debate, and I thank the Secretary-General for his inspiring introductory remarks.

Hungary aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU). Speaking in my national capacity, I would now like to add a few thoughts.

For a long time now, we have been arguing that there is a need for a sharper focus on prevention across all stages of conflict. In that connection, last year Hungary offered a voluntary contribution to support the work of the Department of Political Affairs in preventive diplomacy and mediation. Given that United Nations police can contribute across the entire spectrum of peace and security, we decided to deploy police experts to two African missions, and we seek further opportunities to boost our police presence in other United Nations peace operations.

We believe that women's participation in United Nations peace and security efforts, including post-conflict governance and peacekeeping, is very important. Hungary has intensified its efforts to identify, nominate and deploy female military experts and police officers to United Nations peacekeeping and EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions. In the coming months, female Hungarian officers will be deployed to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, and they will serve as good examples for their compatriots.

Hungary has shown firm and long-standing dedication to contributing to the elaboration and realization of the universal and ambitious road map of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our ultimate goal should be to ensure everyone peaceful and secure living conditions in their homelands, but that can be achieved only by tackling the root causes. As part of our prevention efforts we must deal with transnational risks such as violent extremism, climate change, water scarcity and modern slavery. In that context, Hungary just increased its voluntary contribution to the UN-Women project that focuses on violent extremism. We recently hosted the Budapest Water Summit 2016 to give momentum to the implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and we will continue to work towards achieving the various SDG targets aimed at eradicating modern slavery, human trafficking and forced and child labour. We encourage the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations response by adopting specific measures to improve international coordination in that area.

As a new member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2017-2019, one of our priorities will be to work towards the prevention of atrocity crimes and to promote already existing tools available to the international community that can contribute to an effective and timely response.

We believe that the prevention role of the United Nations should be strengthened. We would like to invite all Member States to join the code of conduct developed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and already signed by 112 Member States, and, by doing so, to pledge to support timely and decisive action by the Council aimed at preventing or ending the commission of atrocity crimes.

Hungary will support the leadership efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at creating a strong, efficient, responsible and credible United Nations that is able to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century. We are ready to contribute to the work of this noble Organization with our best efforts.

The full version of my statement will be circulated.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon): The idea of preventive diplomacy is rooted, as we all know, in the purposes and principles of the United Nations, which are defined in its Charter, in particular in Article 1, paragraph 1,

> "[t]o maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace".

That has inspired successive Secretaries-General, from Dag Hammarskjöld — your fellow citizen, Madam President — to Boutros Boutros Ghali and our current Secretary-General, to move the United Nations "from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention", as is often said. It has also been the central piece of many debates in the Security Council, including the one organized by Lebanon in September 2011 (see S/PV.6621), to which my country, as President, submitted a concept paper entitled "Strengthening and consolidating preventive diplomacy" (S/2011/570, annex). That concept has been reinvigorated in three global policy reviews and many reports and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Suffice it to mention here the preamble to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goal 16.

Yet at the beginning of 2017, our world continues to face a multitude of challenges: from occupation and protracted conflicts to large movements of refugees and migrants to extreme violence, terrorism, violation of human rights and crises in global governance. Today's debate on the topic "Conflict prevention and sustaining peace" should be an opportunity to sharpen the existing tools on prevention and to restore our faith in multilateralism's ability to push forward the agenda for peace and its sustainability.

In an attempt to answer the questions raised in Sweden's concept note (S/2017/6, annex) framing the debate, allow me to highlight the following points.

The United Nations currently has at its disposal a significant array of assets in the field of conflict prevention, including the Secretary-General's good offices, envoys, resident political missions, United Nations country teams, situation briefings, the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, regional offices, peacekeeping operations, groups of friends and their diplomatic support, fact-finding missions, inquiries and investigations. We look to the Secretary-General for a reinvigorated approach to strengthening those assets and streamlining their roles. Close cooperation between the Council and an effective and efficient Secretariat is pivotal in our preventive endeavours. Moreover, partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, youth, women, civil society and academia will improve our early-warning systems' ability to identify the source of tension, to address it and to consolidate the national, regional and international support needed to support peaceful and developmental processes built on respect for human rights.

We, the Member States, should remain committed to achieving the reform of the United Nations, which will strengthen its ability to fulfil its mandate in our increasingly interconnected world with its new threats to peace and security. While wishing to respect the mandates of the various organs, we can see that the nature of those challenges requires an integrated approach within the United Nations. It is imperative to build upon the preventive initiatives taken by other agencies, such as UNESCO in the field of education and the United Nations Development Programme in the area of good governance, democratic processes and elections, just to name a few.

My region, the Middle East, is a clear example of the importance of placing the need to address the root causes of conflicts at the top of our agenda. Moreover, in the context of conflict prevention, I remind the Council of Lebanon's initiative in 2016, namely, to seek, based on the Charter of the United Nations and paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), the good offices of the Secretary-General in the demarcation of the disputed maritime border of the exclusive economic zones between Lebanon and Israel, emphasizing that the non-resolution of that issue will remain a source of conflict that threatens the peace and security of our region.

Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, which entrusts the Secretary-General with the authority to

> "bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security",

should always be considered in the context of shared responsibility in the maintenance of peace and security. Regular briefings, frank reviews of situations and open debates, just like the one we are having today, will pave the way towards the collective ownership of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

Mr. Vale de Almeida: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 28 member States of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries, Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement. The full text of my statement is being distributed. I will try to limit my statement to a few remarks.

The first one is to thank Sweden for its initiative in organizing this open debate, the second one to thank Secretary-General Guterres for a very convincing outline of what needs to be done and for reminding us of the clear imperative for all of us to work as hard as we can, collectively, on finally getting prevention right, because we know that we have often failed on many fronts. As Mr. Guterres has said, "trillions of dollars are spent destroying societies and economies". The human suffering that we are currently witnessing is immense and, frankly, shameful. We therefore wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General's call to "put peace first", and welcome the strong emphasis that he places on prevention.

Security and development are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and are key to preventing crises and to achieving sustainable peace. The link permeates the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The General Assembly and the Security Council have both agreed that sustaining peace is the joint responsibility of Governments and societies and is supported by the international community. The high-level reviews underlined the need to prioritize prevention in order to break the cycle of responding too late.

Prevention is better than firefighting, and sustaining efforts for peace reduces human and financial costs immensely in the long run. We know that we must develop a political culture of acting sooner in response to the risk of violent conflict. And we must act together, if we want to have any chance of success.

The European Union's new global strategy entitled "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe" emphasizes the importance of acting promptly on prevention. It also emphasizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive approach to conflict, and the EU's commitment to working through the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core. Building on the comprehensive approach and working in an interconnected manner, the EU will use the global strategy to step up its efforts and capacities to strengthen the way we bring together institutions, expertise and instruments and work with member States on prevention, resolution and stabilization. Making coherent use of all the policies at the EU's disposal is essential, much as the United Nations tries to work coherently across all of its pillars. The EU is working with the United Nations on early-warning capacities. If we are to prevent the emergence, re-emergence and escalation of violent conflict, early warning is indispensable. But generating early action is the key. Mediation is recognized as an effective tool for preventing conflicts, as well as for resolving them.

Building and sustaining peace is inescapably linked to inclusive development, resilience and human rights. The best ways to prevent conflicts continue to be democratic governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights, teamed with inclusive economic development. In that context, the proposed new European consensus on development puts forward a shared vision for development cooperation for the EU and its member States, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and designed to respond to current global challenges. It also aims to help build resilience among individuals, societies and States, and emphasizes our strong engagement with the countries most in need. We work in partnership with Governments in countries at risk of conflict and fragility and with external partners and civil society, as defined in the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Peaceful and inclusive societies, good governance, the rule of law, independent judiciaries, reliable police forces and public sectors free of corruption are the best guarantees of sustainable peace and sustainable development. Sustaining peace requires that human rights and fundamental freedoms be respected, protected and fulfilled.

The implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement will be a crucial factor in reducing susceptibility to crises throughout the world. Much of that work will have to be tackled outside the Security Council. But the Council has a particular responsibility to address situations in danger of deteriorating, effectively and in a timely manner. Given the role foreseen for the Secretary-General by Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations in bringing issues to the attention of the Security Council, it is essential that the Council and the Secretariat cooperate smoothly and efficiently.

We must also develop more creative approaches to diplomacy, including by continuing to promote the role of women in peace efforts, for we need them to be at the forefront in creating and sustaining peace. In order to be prepared to respond in a timely and effective manner, the Council could explore new and innovative ways to work with other actors, including civil society. Existing tools such as Arria Formula meetings are very useful in that regard. Horizon-scanning briefings could be reinvigorated, and the Human Rights Up Front initiative, as an early warning tool, should be maintained and strengthened. We urge members of the Security Council not to vote against credible draft resolutions on timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending mass atrocities.

In conclusion, the Council should ensure that longer-term peacebuilding is considered in mission mandates, along with reflections on how to design transitions and strengthen the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. What we need most is to translate what we know into action, so that the United Nations can deliver effectively on its core tasks in a coherent manner. A strong, effective United Nations is more essential than ever.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Mr. Sevilla Borja (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very pleased that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, a country that throughout its rich modern history has always striven to maintain peace in the world through respect for international legal standards, has been presiding over today's important debate on preventive diplomacy — that is, the prevention of conflicts in the maintenance of sustainable peace, a timely issue that the Government of Sweden has fittingly presented for our consideration.

There is no greater or more important priority for the international community than peace. According to the Charter of the United Nations,

> "the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war"

decided to organize legally and to create the United Nations as

> "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends",

which are basically three — to maintain international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among nations in order to strengthen universal peace, and to achieve international cooperation on development, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. There can be no doubt that the Organization has achieved remarkable success during its first 70 years in helping the world to avoid a dreaded new global conflagration — in other words, an aggravated reprise of the two previous wars that "twice in our lifetime ha[ve] brought untold sorrow to mankind", as the Preamble to the Charter has it.

However, those seven decades of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have been cruelly marked by the outbreak of many terrible, smaller wars that we have not been able to prevent, avoid or suppress. Let us recall some of them — though not all, because the list would be very long — Korea; Viet Nam; the colonial wars, especially in Africa, whose consequences continue to this very day, as the Council's agenda shows; the Middle East and Palestine; the Balkans; Afghanistan; Iraq; Libya; Syria, and so on and so forth. Those wars are the result of a lack of respect for the Charter and of the hegemonic decisions taken by the great Powers. Those who led those wars have, unfortunately, gone unpunished, thanks to the politics of power and to the unjust and anti-democratic composition and hegemonic prerogatives of a few countries on the Security Council.

Today humankind and civilization are facing an unprecedented situation that is a serious threat to peace — the onslaught of barbarism in the form of criminal terrorist attacks by non-State actors. We should not fail to point out that that phenomenon has its causes and origins in the same deplorable hegemonic practices and abuses of power of the few who in their irresponsibility have created and supported such criminal gangs. This new situation, which brings bloodshed and humanitarian crises in its wake, is a clear example of the importance of finding political solutions to prevent conflicts before they explode.

Ecuador believes that, in order for the United Nations at this new stage in its life — beginning with a new Secretary-General and the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — to be effective in its fundamental task of maintaining international peace and security, it should at the very least meet the following six requirements.

First, every State, especially the great Powers, should renew its political commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, particularly the obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force in settling international disputes.

Secondly, the Security Council must be democratized once and for all by making it appropriately representative and geographically equitable, eliminating the prerogatives of the few and strengthening the role of the General Assembly.

Thirdly, the Security Council must be more effective in using preventive diplomacy — that is, preventing and avoiding conflicts before they occur. As the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) prepared by Sweden for today's debate points out, we now have

> "a Security Council that is seized primarily with addressing the crises of the day rather than preventing the conflicts of tomorrow."

That is why we enthusiastically support the first administrative and functional measures that Secretary-General António Guterres took based on the view that there is no conflict that cannot be solved politically through the use of diplomacy and peaceful means for settling disputes under international law.

Fourthly, peace and security are intrinsically linked to sustainable development. There can be no peace while hunger and poverty persist, or while there is no decrease in inequality. Fair societies are peaceful societies, and that is true both domestically and at the international level. The most effective preventive diplomacy would be the immediate implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for which political commitment is key in our efforts to guarantee financing, technical cooperation and technology transfer.

Fifthly, we fully support efforts in the field of disarmament, an issue that seems recently to have been overlooked.

Sixthly, and finally, the following examples are flash points for potential international conflicts: continued colonial domination over territories while the colonizers seek to take domestic legal steps to maintain their dominion; territories subject to foreign occupation; and the presence of military bases of one country in the territory of another. The resolution of those situations once and for all must be part of our new commitment to conflict prevention, so that we can deliver sustainable peace.

I echo the words pronounced by António Guterres after he was sworn in as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Prevention requires that we address the root causes through the three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. That must be our priority in everything we do.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Swedish delegation for having convened this open debate, and also to congratulate it on assuming its mandate in the Security Council.

Argentina is convinced that, in order to achieve sustainable peace, prevention and peacebuilding activities must be included not just in the post-conflict phase but also before, during and immediately after conflicts. For that reason, my country has for many years supported the adoption of a comprehensive approach that tackles the deep-rooted causes of conflict through the strengthening of the rule of law, the promotion of sustained and sustainable economic growth, poverty eradication, social development, the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, including ensuring that the needs of all sectors of the population are always taken into consideration. Such an approach covers activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, exacerbation, continuation and recurrence of conflict. It does so by addressing the deep-rooted causes and by supporting parties to conflict so that they can put an end to hostilities, enable national reconciliation and move towards recovery, rebuilding and development.

The United Nations system is endowed with a broad array of tools in the areas of preventive diplomacy and mediation. Nevertheless, as was made glaringly clear during the review of the peacebuilding architecture, there is a need to strengthen those tools and to achieve greater coherence in our prevention strategies. Each of the organs of the United Nations has a specific responsibility and function, mandated by the Charter of the United Nations, with regard to prevention and the broad concept of peacebuilding. The General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, deal with issues relating to prevention. Regrettably, experience has shown us that the preventive action carried out by each of those bodies is often fragmented, and there is a lack of a single overarching vision to shape the efforts made. If we wish to enhance our prevention capacity, we need to craft concrete strategies, not just so as to ensure that there is early warning of conflict but also to encourage early action. Emphasis must be placed on preventing and not just mitigating or resolving conflict. We must give priority to political — not military — solutions.

Coordinated work between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General is vital in order to boost the capacity of the United Nations in thia area. The Secretary-General has a key role to play in achieving greater coherence in conflict prevention. It is for that reason that Argentina welcomes and supports the proposals of the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening the prevention agenda and at giving fresh impetus to diplomacy for peace. We believe that the proposal of the Secretary-General to strengthen the mediation and good offices agenda of his Office is very appropriate. We must not lose sight of the fact that, for those efforts to be successful, all parties to a dispute or conflict must cooperate fully with the Secretary-General as he seeks to fulfil his mandate. That would allow us to bolster the role of the United Nations as an honest and mutual broker. It is crucial that we deliver greater consistency in the actions taken by the Secretariat and the United Nations system in terms of prevention and peacebuilding. Putting an end to fragmentation and, in many instances, to the duplication and overlapping of efforts must be one of our priorities. And it is for that reason that we commend the fact that one of the roles of the new Special Adviser on Policy will be to seek out and deliver greater systemic coherence and consistency among the policies, tools and operations linked to prevention.

A comprehensive preventive approach necessarily includes full national involvement in the process of peacebuilding. The participation of Governments and the various political and social actors of Member States involved in those processes is essential. Such national involvement must be encouraged by the United Nations and by other international actors, who can support and facilitate that process, but not lead it.

There is also much to be done at the regional level. We must continue pursuing actions that will deliver peace in concert with regional and subregional organizations, which are crucial allies in the development of strategies conducive to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In the Americas, I think it worth pointing out the role that could be played by the Organization of American States and other subregional organizations, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Union of South American Nations and the Southern Common Market.

The allocation of greater resources to prevention will contribute to avoiding the outbreak of new conflicts and the recurrence of old ones. That is the only way to save lives and to protect the progress that we have made in terms of sustainable development and to avoid having to devote untold resources in the future to alleviating the aftermath of conflict. Argentina believes that peacebuilding activities must be underpinned by predictable and sustainable financing. For that reason, we will continue to support the recommendation that the Peacebuilding Fund should be allocated an appropriate sum drawn from the contributions of individual Member States, which should be established by the budget of the Organization.

Finally, I would like to highlight that, as a country committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter, Argentina reiterates the resolute concern of its foreign policy and its diplomatic action to support conflict prevention, the sustaining of peace, the rule of law and human rights.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Bird (Australia): Conflict prevention and sustaining peace go to the heart of the Charter of the United Nations. They are core principles bringing together all three pillars of the work of the United Nations. We therefore welcome Sweden's choice of today's topic for the first open debate under the tenure of the new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres.

Australia is deeply committed to that agenda. We were pleased to co-facilitate the sustaining peace resolutions, and strongly support the key messages provided by the recent major reviews. We commend the Secretariat on the progress made and look forward to breaking new ground this year in advancing the use of conflict prevention tools and policies.

We particularly welcome the Secretary-General's comments that, inspired by the sustaining peace resolutions, he will take forward comprehensive reform. Cultural, structural and process reforms based on the sustaining peace resolutions are all crucial. The Secretary-General has the prerogative to make such necessary reforms of the Organization, as they fall within his authority, and we encourage him to continue to do so. We are greatly encouraged by the Secretary-General's early decisions to strengthen the Secretariat's performance. More must be done to improve coherence, accountability and financing for sustaining peace.

First, coherence requires strong coordination. Fragmentation is untenable and undermines the effectiveness of the United Nations in this area and others. We welcome the Secretary-General's initial decisions to address this. More must be done at all levels to improve coordination between departments, between agencies, between the field and Headquarters and between policy and programmes. The quadrennial comprehensive policy review included a welcome emphasis on the importance of sustaining peace and prevention as an intellectual and practical lens through which to align Headquarters and country approaches. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) also has a vital role in implementing the sustaining peace agenda. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and DPKO should continue to adopt new policies and practices for enhanced coherence and joint programmes.

Secondly, with regard to accountability, it is paramount to monitor progress and recognize success and failure. Independent, frank advice to the Security Council should be a key role for the Secretary-General and of the Secretariat broadly. The little-used Article 99 should become a standard tool. We welcome collaboration between the Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office and UNDP to take forward pilot projects on sustaining peace in Sri Lanka and Burkina Faso. The lessons learned from those projects should shape new practices and policies for a coherent United Nations.

Finally, new financing approaches are long overdue. A fit-for-purpose United Nations must be financed in a way that stimulates the highest-quality advice, personnel and action on the ground. That will ensure a nimble, innovative United Nations that responds to needs rather than corporate structures to achieve action that lives up to our rhetoric.

The Secretary-General's report to the seventy-second session of the General Assembly called for in the resolutions on sustaining peace will be key, including its critical financing element. Investing in the existing peacebuilding architecture is also important to ensure that crucial peacebuilding gaps are met. Australia's recent $10 million commitment to the Peacebuilding Fund shows our confidence in this tool.

The sustaining peace agenda must be central to all our efforts in 2017. Australia welcomes the Secretary-General's leadership and urges the whole of the United Nations to come together to advance this agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Ms. Boucher (Canada) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking Sweden for organizing this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. As we begin the year with a new Secretary-General, today's debate is extremely timely and goes directly to the heart of the Organization's fundamental purpose.

We are confronting a challenging global situation, and we continue to face threats to international peace and security that generate major pressures on the Organization and on Member States. In numbers unprecedented since the Second World War, people around the globe remain displaced by conflict. The duration of protracted refugee situations is also lengthening, which puts sustained pressure on those displaced, on host communities and on the global capacity for humanitarian response. The indiscriminate bombing and targeting of civilians and medical facilities have become the hallmark of too many conflicts. The senseless attacks recently suffered by civilians in Aleppo represent perhaps the lowest point in our collective response in protecting populations at risk.

Clearly, we must do more and do it sooner to prevent conflicts from escalating. We must do more to secure sustainable peace in fragile situations. Over the past year, Canada has sought to reinforce the capacity of the United Nations to support conflict prevention and peacebuilding. As Prime Minister Trudeau signalled to the General Assembly (see A/71/PV.8), pluralism and inclusion represent crucial values in building peaceful societies and sustainable development.

(*spoke in English*)

Various high-level reviews conducted over the past two years — by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and by the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, and the global study on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) — highlighted the importance of prevention. Many of those recommendations were endorsed by Member States in the landmark Security Council and General Assembly resolutions (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) on sustaining peace. Not only must that work continue, but we encourage the Secretary-General to articulate an ambitious plan of action to advance those objectives. Let me highlight a few areas where Canada would like to see greater emphasis.

We know that political solutions lie at the heart of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. However, preventing conflict and sustaining peace must become overarching goals of all United Nations activities before, during and after conflict, including for the human rights and development pillars. We also think it is important to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity for joint analysis and joint planning, as well as for conveying timely early-warning information and analysis to Member States. Overall, we believe a better balance must be struck between the considerable resources spent on peace operations and those supporting conflict prevention and sustaining peace, particularly in the field.

As for the Security Council, we encourage it to make greater and fuller use of its prevention toolbox, including Chapter VI measures, as well as the use of special political missions. We also think the Secretary-General has a central role to play in galvanizing international action for peace.

Finally, we really do need a stronger link between sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As highlighted in the Stockholm declaration of 2016, peacebuilding and State-building are integral to sustainable development, not separate from it. While that link is recognized in the 2030 Agenda, we believe that it needs to be strengthened with greater urgency. The sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas intersect in multiple ways, but perhaps the most important priorities are gender equality, women's empowerment and the participation of women and youth in peacebuilding and governance. We urge the Secretary-General and the Council to continue to strengthen the work of the United Nations on gender and youth, particularly in countries experiencing fragility.

We look forward to working closely with our new Secretary-General. We offer our full support to him and to his team, as well as to Council members, as we advance this important agenda.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

Ms. Pham (Viet Nam): I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating the President on Sweden's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and in thanking the President for convening this very important meeting on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. My sincere congratulations and warm welcome also go to the new non-permanent members of the Security Council and the new Secretary-General. I would like to wish them tremendous successes throughout their terms.

Our world today is facing a multitude of complex emerging and recurring security challenges, both traditional and non-traditional. Prolonged disputes not only hinder the development efforts; they are also potential causes of conflict. The Asia-Pacific region is no exception and is wracked with intractable conflicts over natural resources and territorial disputes, including in the East Sea — also known as the South China Sea — that could undermine international peace and security.

Therefore, it is high time for the United Nations to renew its commitment to taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. The United Nations should continue its leading role in promoting a collective security architecture. For such an architecture to work, we must strengthen multilateralism, advance the establishment of rules and norms and ensure respect for and compliance with international law, without any threat or use of force. We treasure the values outlined in the vision of the new Secretary-General for fulfilling the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

As indicated in relevant resolutions and reports during the past reviews on the United Nations peace and security architecture, there is an urgent need to put conflict prevention and dispute settlement at the core of the Organization's work, as provided for in Article 33 of the Charter. In order to achieve such goals, the Security Council should continue to promote robust leadership and actively assume its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Such endeavours also need the shared responsibility of all Member States, with strong political will and the active participation of the relevant international, regional and subregional organizations.

Furthermore, we should strengthen close coordination and cooperation within the United Nations system, particularly among the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly, in order to develop a long-term and comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and sustainable development, with due respect for national independence, sovereignty and integrity.

We also believe that additional internationally binding legal instruments are much needed and should be strengthened to effectively control the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, to combat transnational human and drug trafficking and to prevent the propagation of violent extremist ideology and terrorism. More attention should be given to assisting Member States in addressing the root causes of conflicts, promoting national reconciliation, reconstruction and development and enhancing good governance and institutional capabilities, which are key factors that lead to sustaining peace.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Viet Nam is a very proud member, is a community striving for peace, harmony and shared responsibility, and has been playing the central role in building our region's security architecture, thereby contributing to the maintenance of peace and security in South-East Asia. ASEAN has also worked, with much success, to seek solutions to disputes and prevent conflicts, including in the East Sea. ASEAN has always been committed to upholding the primacy of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and diplomatic and legal processes, to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and to striving for an early conclusion of a code of conduct in the South China Sea. We call on all States to join ASEAN in that effort, with the common vision for a South-East Asian region of peace, stability and prosperity. In order to move the United Nations conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda forward, we need bold and tireless endeavours from both the United Nations and Member States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Sweden for convening this debate. We value this first opportunity for interaction with Secretary-General António Guterres, to whom we reiterate Chile's support as he carries out his duties and whose proposals to improve performance in terms of peace and security, including through the establishment of an internal review group, we are following with interest.

In addition to the traditional threats to international peace and security, there are new threats that are not always of a State or military nature. Indeed, an important part of the Security Council's agenda relates to conflicts that have arisen internally. For that reason, one of the axes for action to prevent internal conflicts that can threaten international peace and security is the promotion of stable societies, where radicalization, violence and extremism have no place. Prevention should be promoted through a multidimensional and integrated approach that addresses the underlying causes of such threats, including socioeconomic, gender, ethnic, tribal, religious or ideological tensions. Such an approach should serve to reinforce the coherence of political, security and development concerns, human rights and the promotion of the rule of law.

When Chile presided over the Council two years ago, it did so with a focus on conflict prevention, with an emphasis on preventing countries in post-conflict situations from relapsing into violence. During the open debate chaired by President Michelle Bachelet on 19 January 2015 (see S/PV.7361), the point that security and development are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing and that their presence is fundamental to sustainable peace was underscored. The importance of inclusive development for the maintenance of international peace and security was emphasized.

Many speakers have discussed ways to promote such an approach. In that regard, in addition to reiterating the importance of improving the Council's working methods and the synergies and flows of information between the Council and the rest of the system, we would like to highlight five measures that we believe could contribute to improving the functioning of the Council's peace and security system.

First, we must empower women and increase their participation in politics, including in peace processes, and we must continue to examine gender issues in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. That entails working for the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related resolutions, to which the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security, known as Group 2242, can contribute.

Secondly, we must strengthen the Peacebuilding Commission, while recognizing its important role in the peacebuilding architecture as a whole. The Council should strengthen its interaction with the Commission, in particular by making greater use of the Commission's advisory role. For its part, the Commission should redouble its efforts to promote greater coherence with national strategies and priorities in the field of peacebuilding, and should highlight the importance of its own coordination with regional and subregional institutions.

Thirdly, we must address and prevent the illegal exploitation of natural resources, which contributes to igniting conflicts. The United Nations can help concerned States, as appropriate and at their request and with full respect for their sovereignty over their natural resources, to prevent illegal access to those natural resources and to help concerned States lay the framework for the legal exploitation of natural resources in a way that contributes to their development.

Fourthly, attention must be focused on the protection of critical infrastructure and the prevention of attacks on that infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. That is essential for ensuring the well-being of citizens and consolidating peace. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the Oslo Safe Schools Declaration.

Fifthly, and finally, we must implement resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, which is the first resolution to recognize young people as actors in peace processes and urges Governments to increase the participation of youth and the representation of youth in peacekeeping initiatives, bearing in mind that 600 million young people currently live in conflict zones or fragile States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Sweden for convening this important debate.

The multiple crises that we were faced with in 2016 show how acutely necessary this debate is and how important it is to draw lessons from the situation and improve conflict prevention. Switzerland is pleased that this debate is taking place in the presence of the Secretary-General, and we support his call for the strengthening of prevention. We would like in that connection to make three remarks.

First, we need to invest more in United Nations instruments aimed at preventing conflict and maintaining peace. Those tools include the United Nations Development Programme-Department of Political Affairs Joint Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention and the Peacebuilding Fund, which have produced excellent results. The Department of Political Affairs entities in charge of mediation and good offices, as well as special political missions, play an important role. Nevertheless, Switzerland regrets that those instruments are chronically underfunded, and we remain firmly committed to providing our political and financial support to those key instruments.

Secondly, prevention is a responsibility to be shared by all United Nations entities. That means that all parts of the United Nations, including its intergovernmental forums, need to conduct their work within the framework of their respective mandates with a preventive mindset, in line with the new notion of peacekeeping endorsed by the Security Council and the General Assembly. That calls for adopting a proactive, inclusive, comprehensive and coordinated approach to conflict, as well as for national ownership of peacekeeping.

We need to work on our institutional measures in order better to understand the links between peace and security and between development and human rights. The nexus between peace and security and human rights has, in our view, particular potential with regard to conflict prevention. Human rights violations can be precursors that lead to conflicts. They can also indicate potential instability or an escalation of conflict. We must therefore step our efforts aimed at taking greater advantage of that capacity. For that reason, Switzerland launched the appeal of 13 June 2016 in the Human Rights Council. The appeal is aimed at putting human rights at the core of conflict prevention and is now supported by 70 States. In that same regard, we firmly support the Human Rights Up Front initiative and commend the fact that the new Secretary-General will follow up with efforts to that end.

That brings me to my third point, which is the role of the Security Council. In resolution 2171 (2014), the Council conveyed its determination to take effective and rapid measures to prevent armed conflicts. We stand ready to support the Council in its work aimed at strengthening its capacities in the area of prevention. In accordance with the appeal of 13 June, cooperation between the Security Council and the Human Rights Council is a central component. For example, the members of the Security Council can request periodic informational meetings with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. They can use the reports of the Human Rights Council and its various mechanisms as a source of information and enhance cooperation between the Security Council's subsidiary bodies and the relevant mechanisms of the Human Rights Council. More generally, we encourage the Security Council to further reflect on the nature of the existing interlinkage between its own mandate and activities and those of the other parts of the United Nations system.

In order to strengthen prevention, partnerships, for example, between local, national, regional and international actors, or between States, organizations and civil society, are crucial. Accordingly, Switzerland will continue to work with entities committed to such goals and stands ready to give its full support to the Secretary-General in the context of a renewed effort to prevent conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, and your delegation on the beginning of your mandate and the assumption of your presidency of the Security Council. I also warmly welcome the new Secretary-General to this debate and thank him for sharing his visions and thoughts.

I also associate my delegation with the statement delivered by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Despite its limited success in decreasing the number of wars among nations, the United Nations is yet to have any success in harnessing the violence and extremism perpetrated by non-State actors within nations and across international borders, especially those that resort to the most barbaric forms of violence and shamelessly glorify it. A cursory look at the list of issues that the Council has dealt with in the past few years shows that it is increasingly overwhelmed with internal conflicts and the criminal acts of terrorist and extremist non-State actors, including cross-border terrorist activities, the recruitment of foreign terrorists fighters planning terrorist acts in various countries and transnational organized crime, among others.

What we need to do now is to focus increasingly on preventing and suppressing this new scourge that the United Nations was not originally established and designed to deal with. A deeper analysis of the political environment reveals that aggression is still one of the major causes that lie at the root of the violent extremism that we are currently facing. The occupation of Palestinian territory by the Israeli regime, which is the result of Israeli aggression, lies at the core of the ongoing tension and anger in the Middle East. The United States aggression against Iraq in 2003 is one of the major causes that radicalized groups and individuals across and beyond the region. The same applies to Syria and Yemen, where foreign intervention and aggression have damaged the prospects for international cooperation aimed at fighting terrorist and extremist groups, while putting an end to the prospects for peace. Although we have acquired some historical distance from the age of nations fighting among themselves, the United Nations should remain adamant in preventing aggression, which is one of the root causes of the new emerging threats. That mission is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. There is still an obvious linkage between aggression in the classic sense of the word and the eruption of violence and other threats on the part of non-State actors.

Apart from aggression, extremist, takfiri and xenophobic ideologies, which are simultaneously on the rise in the East and West, constitute another root cause of the violence that is currently engulfing some parts of the world. The ideologues and preachers who spread hatred towards others are at the heart of all of the resulting atrocities. It is imperative that the United Nations encourage all Member States to cut off access to groups and those who preach hate from public platforms, and take a proactive role in ensuring that civilization and intercultural and interfaith dialogue and understanding are encouraged, promoted and protected.

Undoubtedly, there are a number of other important factors that create fertile ground for the spread of violence — factors that we have to deal with seriously if we wish to prevent more conflicts and make peace sustainable. They include, but are by no means limited to, injustice, discrimination, poverty, underdevelopment and corruption, as well as economic factors, environmental degradation, water- and land-related issues and cultural deprivation and marginalization.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): Estonia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union.

Let me start by thanking Sweden for convening this important and timely debate, and the new Secretary-General António Guterres for outlining his vision for a renewed focus on conflict prevention. Allow me also to congratulate Mr. Guterres on his appointment as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations.

We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General that it is time to put peace first. The ongoing deep-rooted conflicts, displacements and massive movements of refugees and migrants around the world serve as a clear sign that the Security Council and the broader international community have been ineffective in giving priority to prevention. The recent three reviews of United Nations peace-related activities concluded with the same message — there is an urgent need to put prevention at the core of the United Nations work. There is a strong convergence on the need for a collective recommitment to prevention. Our normative developments need to lead to a real shift in how the United Nations addresses peace and security challenges. I would like to point out several areas of importance for ensuring more effective prevention.

First, we must develop a political culture of acting sooner in response to the risk of violent conflict. We must invest in prevention rather than continue to spend money on reacting to conflicts. In that context, we call upon the members of the Security Council not to vote against draft resolutions on timely and decisive action to prevent or end mass atrocities.

Secondly, in order to ensure more effective prevention, it is essential to integrate the peace and security and the human rights and development approaches. None of the United Nations three mandates can be achieved without the other. The promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, the provision of access to justice for all and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels are essential for achieving sustainable peace and stability.

In that context, I would like to emphasize the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to achieve them in conflict-affected countries, we need to devote more attention and resources that target the drivers of conflict. The comprehensive approach of addressing the interdependence between peace, security and development should clearly take into account the protection of human rights, with particular attention given to women's rights, including through their participation in peace processes. We must watch for the first warning signs of conflicts, and human rights violations are such warnings. Therefore, we urge all fellow United Nations Members present here today to be active in supporting and strengthening human rights initiatives, in particular with a view to ensuring United Nations-wide efforts to prevent grave human rights violations and thus future conflicts.

Thirdly, while the primary responsibility for conflict prevention falls on Member States, international institutions have to do their part. The United Nations system needs to work in a more integrated fashion and develop synergies between the Security Council, the Secretariat and other United Nations entities, at both Headquarters and the country level, to implement the "sustaining peace" agenda. We welcome the increasing cooperation of the United Nations with regional organizations aimed at helping them solve regional problems and to include in solutions the States concerned. At the same time, regional organizations should continue contributing to United Nations peace and security efforts.

Lastly, the Security Council has increased its focus on peacebuilding to reduce the risk of relapses into violence. The Council should continue to address peacebuilding through horizon-scanning briefings, ensuring that longer-term peacebuilding is considered in mission mandates and strengthening the advisory role of the Peacebuilding Commission. We encourage the Security Council to address peacebuilding as early as possible.

Let me also highlight the fact that Estonia has supported the Peacebuilding Fund since 2013, as we believe that the Fund is an effective peacebuilding instrument for providing catalytic, fast and flexible assistance. This year Estonia is a member of the Peacebuilding Commission. As a member of the European Union (EU), Estonia fully supports the EU's new global strategy, which emphasizes the importance of acting promptly on prevention and the commitment of the EU to working through the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Indonesia thanks the Swedish presidency for having convened this open debate on a highly important topic and wishes to congratulate the new non-permanent members of the Council.

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Thailand on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the representative of Norway on behalf of UN70, as well as by the representative of Finland on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation. We also welcome many of the points to which the Secretary-General alluded at the beginning of this open debate.

Today there are more peacekeepers on the ground than ever before, and they increasingly operate in contexts where the United Nations is being asked to manage conflict rather than restore or keep the peace. We must ask ourselves why. One of the reasons is that "we the peoples of the United Nations" have not invested enough in addressing the root causes of conflict or in prevention.

Allow me to share some key points on how to put forward the agenda on conflict prevention and sustaining peace within the work of the United Nations.

The first aspect is partnership. The United Nations cannot single-handedly solve the challenges. A stronger global-regional peace and security partnership, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, is essential. In that light, conflict prevention needs to be undertaken by the Security Council by engaging earlier; this should be done in partnership with regional and subregional organizations, in line with Chapter VI, as well as with civil-society groups.

The second aspect is institutionalization. Indonesia supports the recommendation of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations requiring the Secretary-General to develop options for restructuring the Secretariat's peace and security architecture so as to strengthen leadership and management and to put an end to the silo mindset in the United Nations. Synergy between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the main committees, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat should be a prerequisite. We should develop a system-wide approach to conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

We are also happy to note that the new Secretary-General will have conflict prevention as one of his top priorities and will take a leading role in promoting this agenda. His unique insights into the workings of the United Nations, his credibility and the use of his good offices can bring parties together to enable peace, and thus the Security Council should heed his early analysis and advice.

The third aspect is adequate resources. Prevention and mediation should be reinforced through a significant increase and more reliable resourcing through the regular budget and a single peace and operations account for the concept of sustaining peace. We need to also endorse a single peace operations account to finance all peace operations, including special political missions and related backstopping activities. We should also explore how peacekeeping operations can more explicitly integrate conflict prevention and sustaining peace into the implementation of the mandates.

The fourth aspect is a nationally driven process. We believe that United Nations entities should support in particular those Member States lacking the capacity to integrate prevention into national governance and development functions. There should be a comprehensive approach in which socioeconomic development and the security challenges facing ordinary people are addressed by their national authorities effectively. A nationally driven process should also encourage women and youth to play a greater role in fostering reconciliation and building the basis of a collective national vision of peace and prosperity.

The fifth and last aspect is trust. Trust and confidence among all parties is an important element in ensuring implementation with respect to the nexus of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

In conclusion, in the light of today's discussion, my delegation, which is also a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, is of the view that the annual session of the Commission should be reinvigorated as an international forum that enables cross-sectoral stakeholders to create synergies and develop concrete initiatives on sustaining peace. Such a forum will help move everyone from rhetoric to practice, and help countries prioritize political and financial resources for conflict prevention proactively.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cuba.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Strict adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is a duty by which all States committed to international peace and security are bound. War and armed conflicts have brought humankind nothing by terrible suffering and setbacks in their economic and social development, which is why conflict prevention has always been a common goal of the international community. And that is why the Charter of the United Nations, in its Preamble, calls on us to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, practice tolerance and live together in peace; the primary goal is the maintenance of international peace and security.

Many of the conflicts that have taken place over the 70-plus years since the founding of the United Nations could have been prevented if the causes that triggered them had not been on myriad occasions linked to interests related to domination. Sustainable peace implies the elimination of threats that conspire against its full realization as well as the prevention of any breaches of the Charter, including interference in the internal affairs of States, acts of aggression or wars based on the quest to control natural resources, including unconventional wars, which in recent years have become one of the most serious threats to the exercise of the self-determination of peoples.

Stable and lasting peace that will prevent the outbreak of conflict presupposes, first and foremost, the acknowledgement of and unwavering respect for the sovereign equality of States; the peaceful settlement of international disputes; respect for political independence and the political, economic, social and cultural systems that nations have freely decided to implement for themselves; and the rejection of the threat or use of force against another State.

There can be no sustainable, comprehensive, stable or lasting peace as long as some countries impose unilateral coercive measures on others; as long as there exists an unjust and exclusive international economic order; and as long as inequality and selfishness, the result of neoliberal globalization, prevail, increasing discrimination and xenophobia and raising levels of aggressive posturing in military alliance doctrines.

While it is true that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace and stability, it is equally true that there will be no peace and stability without development. There can be no peace as long as millions of people remain condemned to hunger, poverty, discrimination, exclusion and despair.

We acknowledge that the Security Council has a key role to play in the maintenance of international peace and security given the responsibilities conferred upon it by the Charter, for which reason the members of this body must also be the first to promote peaceful solutions to conflict and to show strong, effective and clear resistance to recourse to war and to violations of the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter.

Manipulation and double standards on issues such as terrorism and human rights, aimed at singling out developing countries and discredit their legitimate Governments, do not contribute to the ideal of peace.

We note with concern the increase in such phenomena as the use or threat of use of force, the promotion of hidden agendas for regime change in developing countries, the production of new and more sophisticated weapons, the persistence of large nuclear arsenals, the violation by some States of the principles of international law, intolerance and ethnic and religious-discrimination. Those phenomena all undermine the real possibilities for advancing peace and preventing conflicts.

Improving the ability of the United Nations to prevent and resolve conflicts is more effective than dealing with the costly economic and social consequences and the incalculable human suffering that war brings. In recognizing the relationship between socioeconomic development and international peace and security, we believe that it is important to ensure that any effort to transform the United Nations into a more effective instrument for conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace must take into account the need for a balanced, consistent and comprehensive approach — one that is in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): We thank the Swedish presidency for organizing this open debate, which enables the United Nations membership to renew its collective commitment to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. We are reassured by the Secretary-General's statement that his overriding priority is the pursuit of peace in a holistic, cross-sectoral manner. His words of wisdom remind us of the hard work involved and the importance of conflict prevention as a value, in itself, without undue external political pressure. From our national perspective, we wish, in that connection, to underline five points.

First of all, we consider conflict prevention to be, first and foremost, a national responsibility supported by responsive and functioning institutions, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law and, most important, sustainable development. The active participation of all segments of society, including women and youth, is fundamental to efforts to mitigate the potential drivers of conflict, as well as elements with a propensity to act as spoilers.

Secondly, the United Nations has a critical role to play in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of internationally agreed commitments to support Member States in achieving those conditions in response to their needs and at their request. The United Nations analytical capacity should help identify any structural or systemic drivers of conflict, including the growing challenges posed by violent extremism, climate change, irregular migration and organized crime, among others.

Thirdly, the ability to objectively decipher the early warning signs of conflict — usually manifest in hatred or intolerance, socioeconomic exclusion, systematic discrimination and persecution on ethnic or religious grounds — should give the United Nations an edge in devising context-specific engagement strategies. The range of tools available at its disposal for the pacific settlement of disputes needs to be deployed with sensitivity to the realities on the ground and in consultation with the relevant national, civil society and humanitarian actors.

Fourthly, as highlighted by the 2015 review of the United Nations peace and security architecture, the Organization's conflict-response strategies need to be situated within the broader framework of political solutions to conflicts. As a contributor to increasingly complex United Nations peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh recognizes the need on all sides to manage expectations through a comprehensive, nationally owned and internationally backed approach to sustaining peace.

Fifthly, the current fragmentation in the United Nations response strategies needs to be remedied through incremental work in clarifying the various conceptual and mandate-related issues, the fostering of regular consultations across the principal organs and the mobilization of enhanced and adequate resources, thereby avoiding unnecessary competition and duplication. Meaningful cooperation with the relevant regional and subregional organizations must be pursued jointly and strategically.

It is worth remembering that the most effective bulwark against conflict, hostility, war and the illegitimate use of force is one constructed within the minds of men and women through the promotion of an enduring culture of peace. In this year for peace and beyond, Bangladesh will continue to work towards realizing our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's vision for regional and international peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to commend the Swedish presidency for delving into the promising concept of sustainable peace through this debate devoted to one of its essential components, namely, conflict prevention. We have taken careful note of the important initiatives of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on that topic, which Peru appreciates and values, as well as the proposals and ideas presented earlier today by delegations.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to point out three fundamental factors that contribute to more efficient prevention: the optimization and flow of high-quality information on emerging conflicts, an integrated, cross-cutting approach to addressing the structural causes of conflicts, and the search for renewed political commitment.

With regard to the topic of information, Peru welcomes the recent measures adopted by the Secretary-General after assuming his post. Of particular importance is the strengthening and enhancement of the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre. Peru understands that that unit is to be used to improve the processing and analysis of information from reliable sources. In order to do so, we must strengthen review and evaluation units, both on the ground and at Headquarters, by providing them with adequate human capital and the necessary logistical resources and by increasing our use of information technology.

My delegation also believes that any analysis of a chain of events and the choice of response to those events always require a multidisciplinary approach, in which political, economic, sociological, cultural and other elements are considered and assessed in a comprehensive manner. Only then will we be able to more efficiently address the complexities and specifics of each scenario and conflict, and find timely and adequate responses to them.

As for the need for conflict prevention through a more multidimensional and integrated approach, the Council should take note of and support the efforts of the international community to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As the Agenda recognizes, there can be no sustainable development without peace and security, and peace and security are precarious without sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda also notes, inter alia, the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. To that end, it holds us to our commitment to achieve Goal 16 — to which Peru attached particular importance during the preparatory negotiations. Specifically, that Goal seeks to address the factors that generate violence, insecurity and injustice, such as inequality, corruption, bad governance, violent extremism and illegal flows of financial resources and weapons.

In that connection, we should recall that, in December, in its latest resolution regarding the policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (General Assembly resolution 71/243), the General Assembly recognized that sustainable development can play a positive role in mitigating the causes of conflict, disaster risk, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies. In that regard, an integrated systemic response requires greater coordination and complementarity among the needs for development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and the maintenance of peace. That is essential if we seek to respond to the needs of all as effectively and efficiently as possible and to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, I note that we must strengthen political will so as to enhance conflict-prevention efforts as they relate to the primacy of the principles of national ownership and a people-centred approach, both of which appear in the 2030 Agenda and in the identical resolutions on sustaining peace that were adopted in April by the Security Council and the General Assembly (resolutions 2282 (2016) and 70/262, respectively). The United Nations system, with the legitimacy granted to it by its universal membership and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, is called upon to play a crucial role in conflict prevention — by providing the assistance, political support and the necessary funding to lay the foundation for lasting peace. It is a new role — in which the pillars of peace and security, development and human rights come together for the first time under the banner of sustainable peace — an approach that Peru believes is the most fitting and promising.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. Donoghue (Ireland): I thank Sweden for convening today's debate. I also thank Secretary-General Guterres for making clear his strong commitment to conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

We need to see the adoption in April last year of the two resolutions on sustaining peace (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) as a turning point for the United Nations. Collectively, we are now charged with the responsibility of bringing the United Nations back more closely to the reason of its creation in the first place, that is, to prevent war, rather than to react once war has been waged, and to solve conflict, not merely to manage it.

I associate myself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. I now offer four additional points in my national capacity.

First, conflict rarely comes as a surprise. Human rights violations, hate speech and inter-communal violence are early warning signs of conflict, which is often in clear sight. The challenge is how to respond effectively to such signs with timely action. However, we are making progress. The Security Council has increasingly used the various tools at its disposal, including field visits, emergency any-other-business meetings and statements, to place stronger emphasis on conflict prevention. In addition, the Human Rights up Front initiative has allowed quick decisions to be made, including in the case of South Sudan.

However, more can be done to advance the recommendations made by the three reviews of 2015 and the subsequent sustaining peace resolutions. We would like to see a stronger voice given to those best equipped to flag early warning signs of conflict and make recommendations for action by the Security Council. In addition, we must enhance the flexibility and predictability of the funding needed for interventions that can prevent conflict. If funding is decided on a year-to-year basis or is rigidly earmarked, our capacity to intervene early and quickly to stop conflict from breaking out is significantly diminished.

My second point is that the root causes of conflict can be many and far-reaching. Tackling such root causes is the smart thing to do and is key to sustaining peace. The interlinkages among issues such as poverty eradication, creating sustainable peace, building human security and combating inequalities are critical underpinnings of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They should not be addressed in isolation.

While the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is not primarily the responsibility of the Council, it is clear that the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will over time remove, or lessen, many of the factors that give rise to conflict and other threats to international peace and stability. Debates and briefings in the Council Chamber increasingly recognize that reality and factor in issues of institution-building, governance, economic growth, migration and even climate change.

We applaud the Secretary-General for the emphasis he has placed on the need to address the root causes of conflict. He has stressed that the work of sustaining peace cannot take place in a vacuum. We look forward to the leadership of the Secretary-General and of the Council as we all work together to implement the sustaining peace resolutions in complementarity with the sustainable development and human rights agendas.

My third point is that conflict affects more than the warring parties. To address conflict, we must include everyone, especially civilians. When States and societies are fractured, we need to listen to civil society organizations and to ensure their participation in the achievement of lasting peace. Women must be involved at all stages along the peace continuum — from prevention to peace negotiations and post-conflict governance. Furthermore, the youth, peace and security agenda should be utilized to support initiatives on conflict prevention. Sustaining peace is an objective for all generations.

Finally, the role of regional partners cannot be overstated. Our efforts towards sustaining peace will fall short if we fail to draw on the expertise and experience of regional and subregional bodies.

The United Nations is operating in a constantly changing world. It is unlikely that those who drafted the Charter of the United Nations considered phrases such as "international terrorism", "non-State actors" or "national reconciliation processes". Nevertheless, although the times have changed and the terminology is different, the principles of the Charter remain pristine and absolute. To ensure that we are all part of a United Nations that is fit for purpose, our deliberations on sustaining peace must be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. We must all keep our eyes firmly on the prize of peace and reach an enhanced understanding of how lasting solutions to conflict can be achieved.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mrs. Chigiyal (Federated States of Micronesia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS).

At the outset, we would like to thank Sweden for convening today's important debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Similarly, we would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for the upcoming high-level dialogue entitled "Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace", scheduled for 24 January.

We would also like to recognize Secretary-General António Guterres and to thank him for his proactive leadership on this very important issue. In many of his recent statements, including an excellent article in *Newsweek* yesterday, he highlighted the interlinkages between conflict and many of its root causes: poverty, inequality, human rights violations and environmental destruction. In his *Newsweek* article, he stated that,

> "climate change, population growth, rapid urbanization, food insecurity and water scarcity are adding to the tensions and instability".

The Pacific States fully agree. We must reinvigorate our political and diplomatic engagement in responding to conflict, and a significant portion of that energy must be directed towards improving the material circumstances of people. Happy, safe and secure people rarely see the need to reach for a weapon. And the single-largest threat to the safety and security of present and future generations is climate change.

In resolution 63/281, the General Assembly agreed that climate change could have security implications and invited all relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts to address the matter. That was followed by a landmark report (A/64/350) by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", in which he labelled climate change as a threat multiplier and identified food and water insecurity, natural resources scarcity, exposure to extreme events and human migration as some of the numerous channels through which climate change has the potential to destabilize societies.

In a 2011 presidential statement (S/PRST/2011/15), the Security Council agreed, recognizing that climate change could aggravate existing threats to international peace and security. Since 2011, the threat of climate change has only increased. Impacts are happening faster and are more severe than most scientists had previously projected. The Paris Agreement notwithstanding, current emission trends are still far from adequate. The climate-change threat is unprecedented, and therefore we need new tools to respond. For that reason, the Pacific States are renewing their call for the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative on climate and security.

The Special Representative would serve the Secretary-General, with the responsibilities that would include reporting regularly to the General Assembly and the Security Council on emerging climate-related security threats; facilitating regional cooperation and the resolution of border issues that might be affected by climate change; helping vulnerable countries evaluate their security-related national circumstances and develop action plans to increase their resilience; identifying and monitoring potentially dangerous tipping points at the climate change/security nexus; engaging in creative preventive diplomacy, as appropriate, and supporting post-conflict situations when climate change is a risk factor that could undermine stability.

The initial outputs of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the first two years of work should include, first, an update of the Secretary-General's 2009 report (A/64/350), including the status of implementation of resolution 63/281 and an assessment of United Nations capacity to respond to the security implications of climate change; secondly, working with relevant scientific bodies and research organizations, a new report that identifies and analyses potentially dangerous tipping points at the climate/security nexus, along with recommendations for improving our ability to monitor and respond; and, thirdly, preliminary climate-security risk assessments for interested vulnerable countries.

To be completely clear, the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General should in no way alter the mandates of the Security Council. The mandates of existing bodies and institutions, most notably the General Assembly, must be respected.

The climate-change risk is real. It is dangerous and it is growing. It will touch the lives of billions over the coming century, threatening their well-being and, in some cases, their lives. It has the potential to undermine global peace and stability in ways we are only beginning to understand. Moreover, the nexus between climate change, peace and security and the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be ignored. For those reasons, the Pacific SIDS urge all countries to support our call for a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on climate and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Sweden on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month. I thank you, Mr. President, and wish you every success in your new role. Likewise, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his strong and important statement this morning, and to wish him every success in his new role and assure him of the full support of Jordan as he works to discharge his agenda.

We are committed to security and peace. They are objectives that we want to meet first and foremost. We align ourselves with the statement many by the representative of Norway on behalf of UN70.

The world is today seeing very complex and prolonged conflicts, and their scale and impact is growing, sometimes beyond the capacity of the United Nations to respond. It is not just a question of conflicts in specific geographical regions. Far from it: there are some regions, such as the Middle East, which are of major significance, given the waves of instability that they face and of which they are victims, but we see many more conflicts and threats.

Our region is facing major political and ideological challenges. The populations in the region are facing a number of different problems, whether we are talking about the occupied Palestinian territories or Syria or Yemen. But all of this means that we need to make sustainable peace and security within our region a priority and find fair and holistic solutions to conflicts and the causes of conflict, in order to respond to the aspirations of our peoples to a life that is secure and dignified.

As I have said, we face major challenges, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as well as extremism and terrorism. Those challenges have become a threat around the world as well as a threat to international humanitarian law and human rights law. The responsibility for the prevention of conflicts and for maintaining peace should be a real commitment that goes beyond international reports and declarations. We have to work seriously on the ground if we indeed want to save future generations from the horrors of those conflicts.

The primary responsibility for prevention falls to States. From previous experience in prevention, and to carry out these efforts with success, efforts must be national in nature. Given the deterioration of peace and security around the world, the role of the United Nations has become more urgent than ever. There is no alternative to the prevention of conflicts. This should be an objective in all of the different bodies and all of the different organizations within the United Nations and should indeed be their ultimate objective, as the Secretary-General said this morning. The United Nations should adopt an effective approach to uprooting evil and do so in cooperation with all partners from international organizations, regional organizations, civil society and international financial institutions.

With that in mind, Jordan supports the Secretary-General's agenda for peace and for the reform of the Secretariat, while also supporting the tools at our disposal, by which I mean the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the political and regional offices as well as the special political missions. All of this will allow us to prevent conflict.

We reiterate the importance of very quickly implementing a strategy to make sure that peace is sustained and to modernize the monitoring mechanisms that we have for peace, in order to take into account the context of each country. This includes the fundamental elements that need to be offered to respond in a timely fashion and to manage the unconventional challenges that we may face today.

Jordan is ready to participate in peacekeeping operations, given its moral commitment to the United Nations strategy for preventing conflict and to providing a response. We support the development of peacekeeping mandates so that they are complementary to national policies and so that they are able to meet the scale of the challenge. With this in mind, the Security Council, given its mandate and the different tools at its disposal, has a specific role to play, a role of mediating in conflict. We also must take into account the Articles of the Charter. The Security Council should work in close cooperation with the Secretary-General so that he can make use of mediation and good offices, among other tools. All of those factors should play a part, based on the long experience of the United Nations. I would also like to commend the important role played by regional organizations in mediation and diplomacy, indeed in preventive diplomacy. This allows for peace negotiations to take place and for expertise and assistance in capacity-building to be offered.

To sustain peace, we need to include the whole of society without any kind of discrimination, in particular of women and young people. These two groups should have an opportunity to participate in an effective way. Jordan has done everything it can to increase awareness of development and the inclusion of young people, in particular respect for, and the implementation, of resolution 2250 (2015), as adopted by consensus, on youth, peace and security. This really is a way of making our processes more inclusive. It allows us to move forward.

The role of women is very important, as it supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and helps to uphold peace and security in the face of challenges. It also helps to implement resolution 1325 (2000) in Jordan. We are aware of the conflicts in the region and of the large migratory flows into our country. Health services and education are offered to those migrants. We therefore need continued international coordination, with Jordan's involvement, so that we are able to discharge our duties.

In conclusion, Jordan reaffirms its responsibility for, and its commitment to, upholding the values of peace, security, tolerance and reconciliation. In that way, we can respond to people's specific aspirations of moving beyond violence and extremism, as well as carry out our international cooperation activities, in particular with the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Papua New Guinea.

Mr. Rai (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of my country, Papua New Guinea, I convey our sincere congratulations to your country, Sweden, Mr. President, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. We also congratulate the new members of the Security Council, namely, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy, Kazakhstan and the Netherlands. We look forward to working with the members of the Security Council to achieve the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome our new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, on his assumption of office, and to express our confidence and best wishes that his strategic leadership will further strengthen the work of the United Nations for the mutual benefit of we the peoples of the United Nations.

My delegation also commends Sweden for the timely convening of this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The theme is highly relevant given the unacceptable level of the increasing and continuing violence, the destruction and humanitarian catastrophe, at the hands of both State and non-State actors, which regrettably have been experienced in many parts of the world today. We are directly impacted by those persons who have fled their homelands to either save themselves or seek new opportunities to survive, as highlighted by the asylum seekers processing centre in my own country, Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guinea welcomes the bold pronouncement by the new Secretary-General to foster and sustain global peace, including conflict prevention, as a strategic priority during his tenure. We also applaud the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to convene the high-level dialogue on the theme "Building Sustainable Peace for All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace".

Sustaining peace as a core agenda of the United Nations must be fully and meaningfully supported by Security Council members and all other Member States in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Parochial politics, which has been a nemesis of global peace and security, unfortunately has been a hallmark in the Council in recent years. That has cost countless innocent lives and livelihoods. It cannot be allowed to continue and needs to change, and change now.

My delegation is of the view that the solid foundations for sustaining peace, including conflict prevention, have been laid under the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. They include, most recently on 27 April 2016, the simultaneous adoption of resolution 2282 (2016) and of General Assembly resolution 70/262, on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

What is required now is the fundamental issue of ensuring the political will and commitment for a paradigm shift that recognizes the importance of an integrated and comprehensive approach to peace, including conflict prevention. Those must include reforms of the outdated and inadequate existing structures, practices and policies; improved coherence and synergies among peace, human rights and sustainable development work in the United Nations system, such as in the Peacebuilding Commission; the mobilization of resources at a sustained and predictable level; and strengthening the partnership among all the relevant stakeholders. Moreover, country ownership and leadership in addressing the root causes of conflicts is pivotal.

My country learned from our decade-long internal bitter civil conflict in Bougainville, 29 years ago — a conflict that claimed many lives and livelihoods and whose impact is still felt today — that sustaining peace and enjoying its dividends entails the following: First, the imperative of investing political will and commitment in conflict prevention actions before, during, and after conflict; scondly, adequately addressing the underlying root causes of tensions and conflict; thirdly, the importance of peaceful dialogue to resolve conflicts; and, fourthly, the relevance and importance of proactively engaging women in peace processes.

Sustaining peace has intrinsic links to sustainable development. Indeed, the preamble of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes that,

> "[t]here can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development". (*General Assembly resolution 70/1, preamble*)

The challenges that climate change poses to our sustainable development and their implications for international peace and security are particularly pertinent to Papua New Guinea and to the other Pacific island States. Just as armed conflict has led to mass movements of people, which has global peace and security implications, climate change is having a similar adverse effect. The loss of territory, food and water insecurity and the involuntary displacement of people from their homes and their quest to seek refuge elsewhere from the catastrophic effects of natural disasters and rising sea levels will inevitably lead to outbreaks in conflict over scarce resources if left unaddressed.

My delegation fully agrees with the Pacific island States Chair's remarks on climate change, which I will not repeat here, except to note with regret the insignificant concrete or coordinated action at the international level to address the security implications of climate change.

As the primary organ under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security the Security Council needs to carefully consider and act decisively with regard to the growing concerns on the nexus between climate change and its security implications, before it is too late.

Finally, not least, I align my statement with the statement recently delivered by the Chair of the Pacific island small States. The full statement will be provided to the Secretariat.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, as well as your country, Sweden, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council at the beginning of your membership. We also congratulate the newly elected members of the Council, namely, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy and Kazakhstan. We also congratulate the new Secretary-General as he begins his wide-ranging duties.

I am fully confident, Sir, that as President of the Security Council you have not overlooked any contribution by any country that has participated in this important discussion on conflict prevention. Allow us to summarize our vision of that important topic in its eight aspects.

First, with regard to the comprehensive concept of conflict prevention, if we look at different conflicts around the world, especially internal conflicts, we see that efforts are not only limited to their prevention alone. We see that conflict prevention is now a reality that includes the following preventing the aggravation of conflict, preventing an ongoing conflict and preventing the exploitation of conflict.

That broader concept of prevention gives the Secretary-General, who enjoys ultimate neutrality, additional major burdens to ensure that a conflict does not become a battleground to advance the interests of other countries, just as in the past conflicts used to be battlegrounds to advance the ideologies of other countries.

With regard to the direct link between conflict prevention and economic and social development, development is the antidote to conflict. Internal conflicts spread and expand in proportion to economic weakness and a lack of development opportunities. I would like to point out that imposing unilateral coercive economic sanctions is as reprehensible as is resorting to the use of force to settle disputes. Under the Charter of the United Nations, only the Security Council is entrusted with the use of force in resolving conflict, and it is therefore the Security Council alone that is entrusted with the use of economic sanctions, as was stated in Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/1995/9, in which the Council agreed that the object of economic sanctions is not to punish but to modify the behaviour of the country concerned.

My next point is on the need to acknowledge the underlying causes of conflict. In the case of Africa, the root causes of conflict are economic deterioration and climate change, which have led to the erosion of green areas, especially on the west coast of Africa as far as the coast of the Sudan. That has resulted, unfortunately, in the outbreak of the conflict in Darfur, which erupted as a direct result of climate change. Despite references in a report of the United Nations Environment Programme to the role of climate change in the emergence of the crisis in Darfur, the position of the United Nations on the issue continues to be limited to what amounts to an implicit denial of that role. I would like to echo what some members have said today regarding the need to appoint a special representative for climate change and security.

My next point is the need to refrain from using violence to attain political objectives, which is a principle of international law. When, at the outset of a crisis, armed rebel movements violate international law, the country concerned must turn to the United Nations and Member States for any possible assistance in preventing and ending such violations.

Next, on sustaining peace, the possibility of sustaining peace is undermined when a country suffers from continued conflict. When the overall situation in a country dealing with an internal armed conflict shows a reduction in military clashes — thanks, of course, to a negotiated peace agreement — we then move to a second phase, in which we can begin to ensure sustained peace. That opportunity has not been available in certain situations, the province of Darfur in the Sudan being one of them. Some members of the Security Council have chosen — through their influence or their role as penholders in the Security Council — to impose the adoption of resolutions that have ensured that those conflicts remain unresolved, and they have thereby created diplomatic confrontations. Council members know that they are supposed to work not on behalf of their own countries and interests but on behalf of the international community. That is a difficult mission, but it is not an impossible one. We must help one another.

On the role of the General Assembly and the United Nations Secretariat, we are pleased that Secretary-General Guterres spoke about the importance of conflict prevention and considers it a priority.

I would like to conclude by quoting the words of Mr. Václav Havel, the late first President of the Czech Republic:

> "We must recognize that we are related to more than the present moment and the present place, that we are related to the world as a whole and to eternity. We must recognize that, by failing to reflect universal, supra-individual and supra-temporal interests, we do a disservice to our specific, local and immediate interests."

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): In the interests of saving time, I will deliver a shortened version of my statement, the full text of which will be circulated.

My delegation would like to thank the Swedish presidency for organizing today's open debate on the important and pressing topic of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. We are also grateful to the Secretary-General for his insightful remarks. Azerbaijan greatly appreciates and fully supports the appeal for peace that he made on 1 January. My country will be an active and strong partner in contributing genuinely to the Organization's joint efforts to make 2017 a year for peace.

The principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes is one of the cornerstones of the Charter of the United Nations and the international legal order. Its primary objective is to ensure that States are committed to respecting one another's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, and refraining from the threat or use of force in their international relations. International law requires not just that we work to produce a successful outcome by preventing or resolving conflicts, but that those outcomes be achieved through a process that is consistent with specific norms. Without that, no solution can provide the necessary foundations for sustainable peace and long-term stability.

As a matter of priority, special attention should be given to the implementation of resolutions adopted by the principal organs of the United Nations, particularly the resolutions relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to conflict prevention and resolution. It is also important to stress the role of the rule of law in establishing a stable and durable peace. Nor can we ignore the critical imperative of shedding light on real facts and of combating impunity. Such efforts must be free of selectivity and politically motivated approaches, however difficult or even unrealistic that may seem.

Armenia's continuing aggression against my country has led to its seizure of a significant part of Azerbaijan's territory, including the Nagorno Karabakh region and seven adjacent districts and some exclaves. It has claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people, ruined cities and livelihoods, and resulted in the forcible expulsion of more than a million Azerbaijanis from their homes and properties. Serious violations of international humanitarian law, amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and acts of genocide, have been committed in the course of the conflict.

Next month will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of an atrocious crime committed by Armenian armed forces and their affiliates against the civilians and defenders of the town of Khojaly in the Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. What happened in Khojaly in February 1992 was the largest massacre of the conflict. The following year, the Security Council adopted four resolutions — resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993) — condemning the use of force against Azerbaijan, the occupation of its territories, the attacks on civilians and the bombardment of inhabited areas. In its resolutions the Council supported the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, affirmed that the Nagorno Karabakh region is an integral part of Azerbaijan and demanded the immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian forces from all of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. At a time when there was a real possibility of halting the bloodshed, saving the lives of thousands of people and investing in development and prosperity, Armenia continued with its annexationist policy.

Very little, if anything, has changed since then. The Security Council's principled demands have still not been implemented, and the mediation efforts conducted for almost 25 years within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe have yet to yield results. Armenia persistently refuses to start meaningful peace negotiations, obstructs the conflict settlement process, regularly resorts to various provocations aimed at escalating the situation in the conflict zone and tries to consolidate the current status quo. The only way to achieve a durable and lasting solution is to ensure the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from the Nagorno Karabakh region and the other occupied territories of Azerbaijan. That is what international law and the Security Council demand.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Begeç (Turkey): I join others in congratulating Sweden on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council.

The Under-Secretary of State of Finland delivered a joint statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation and its co-Chairs, namely, Finland and Turkey. Turkey has also aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. The following remarks are made in my national capacity.

Turkey highly values and genuinely contributes to efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of disputes at the regional and international levels. In that regard, our renewed efforts in cooperation with our partners to address the crisis in Syria, including the suffering of the people, demonstrate both the need for effective political engagement as well as the cost paid in their absence. Defusing tensions before they escalate into violent conflict should be the first course of action in preserving peace and stability, and Member States should commit themselves to that objective.

In any quest for sustaining peace, the root causes of problems should be addressed, long-term grievances must be brought to an end and prospects for security, development and justice should be made available to all.

Turkey has supported the key recommendations of the United Nations reviews, in particular with regard to the primacy of politics and the need for conflict prevention and mediation. Accordingly, we see great merit in conflict prevention, especially through effective mediation. Yet there are Member States that consider that preventive actions without the consent of the parties may lead to premature interventions, and such interventions may eventually damage the prospects of a peaceful solution. We should all recognize those concerns and explore the ways to address them, in particular when we pursue new initiatives.

The complex political, ideological and socioeconomic challenges, as well as asymmetric threats and terrorism, have rendered conflict prevention and resolution more difficult than ever. The humanitarian dimension of conflicts and refugee problems do not make the present situation easier. Those factors dictate a delicate handling of each and every conflict situation where adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law are no less important than proper conflict analysis and inclusive process design. In the meanwhile, the responsible organs of the United Nations, together with the Secretariat, can develop more effective ways to enhance the capacity of preventive diplomacy for our Organization. The good offices of the Secretary-General and United Nations regional offices are certainly important assets at our disposal, and they must be supported with political vision and financial resources. More transparency and consultation with Member States will help improve coherence and build mutual trust throughout the system.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. Bosah (Nigeria): I wish to express my appreciation to the delegation of Sweden for convening this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace as a centrepiece of the United Nations. Nigeria considers it a subject of critical importance to all humankind. Our appreciation goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, for his remarks and for outlining his vision to prioritize prevention in collaboration with the Security Council.

At the outset, we wish to congratulate the delegations of Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy, Kazakhstan and Sweden on assuming membership of the Security Council for the period 2017-2018.

In July 2010, when Nigeria convened an open debate (see S/PV.6360) of the Council on preventive diplomacy, we were motivated by a profound concern that the nature of conflict was outpacing our collective ability to respond effectively to it. We noted that, for too long, the international community had accorded little attention to mediation and the prevention of conflicts. We have placed far too much emphasis on, and devoted enormous resources to, the military dimensions of peace and security, without addressing the root causes of conflicts.

Although the United Nations works to maintain international peace and security, contemporary world security threats have become more complex. We live in a world in which violent conflict is all too common a feature of the daily lives of many across the globe. Fragile constitutional frameworks, limited natural resources and economic disparities can together render a State vulnerable to conflict. The costs of such an outcome are high in terms of both human suffering and economic loss. Moreover, the socioeconomic advances achieved through development efforts are also often lost. Add to that the price of warfare and peacekeeping operations, and the resulting figures are staggering. It is against that backdrop that we must centre our discussion today.

The immediate challenge before us must be how to address those key questions. Africa has, over the years, placed a great deal of political weight on the application of preventive diplomacy strategies by putting in place early-warning and mediation mechanisms. The African Union took bold steps to develop a framework for preventive diplomacy through the efforts of the African Union Peace and Security Council. At the subregional level, the Economic Community of West African States has also made great strides in this area, primarily through the steady implementation of its conflict prevention framework, which encompasses diplomacy, fact-finding and early-warning systems. It is imperative, therefore, that those efforts at the regional and subregional levels be supported both financially and technically by the international community and the United Nations system.

Today a number of effective contact points have been developed within the United Nations system for these collaborative arrangements, especially through the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations regional offices and the Peacebuilding Commission. It is imperative for the United Nations to continue to work with relevant partners in creating enabling environments to ease tensions, build capacities for skilled interventions and foster dialogue. Nigeria has invested resources to support the campaign for preventing conflicts, especially within our subregion. We have adopted the use of preventive diplomacy in addressing complex questions arising from armed conflicts.

We commend the establishment of a steering committee to consider measures for enhancing cooperation across the network of preventive diplomacy actors. In real terms, preventive diplomacy is often most effective when conducted behind the scenes, certainly well before tensions rise to boiling point level. We believe we can foster the growth of conflict prevention at both normative and practical levels. We can standardize our approach to political and peacekeeping missions to reflect the strategic importance of preventive diplomacy.

If indeed our primary responsibility in the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security, the work of the Council in managing international peace and security should be viewed through the lens of preventive diplomacy. If we are able to assist nations and communities in restoring their social and institutional fabric, and if we can also apply ourselves to the ongoing task of providing opportunities for people and their livelihoods, we can go a long way in reducing opportunities for conflict. We can directly and indirectly prevent conflicts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium thanks the presidency of Sweden for having provided us with this opportunity to together undertake strategic reflection on an issue that is of primordial importance and at the very heart of our Organization. I also warmly thank the Secretary-General for his committed words. We are very pleased that he has chosen to accord significant importance to this topic during his mandate. We support his efforts fully, as well as the integrated approach that he presented to us this morning.

Belgium fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union, as well as that of Finland, delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation, to which we belong. I wish to make additional remarks, and will read out an abbreviated version of my statement.

Even in the absence of conflict, we should focus on peacebuilding by working on human rights, sustainable development and the rule of law. Conflicts do not happen by chance. In that regard, we consider it useful to continue to consider the establishment of an early-warning mechanism at the United Nations, like those in other international organizations. The prerogative of the Secretary-General to draw the attention of the Council to a situation posing a risk to peace and security is fundamental. Regular contacts between the Security Council and the Secretariat seem to be another way of proceeding. Existing practices, such as the forward-looking overview, need to be revitalized.

Investing in sustainable development, education, human rights and the rule of law is crucial. Particular attention to fragile and conflict-affected countries is all the more necessary in order to ensure their inclusive development through sustained peace. For example, Belgium has decided to allocate 50 per cent of its official development assistance to fragile and less-developed countries. Belgium implores other donors to do the same.

During a conflict, transitional measures can be taken to invest in future peace. It is important, for example, to launch an educational and reconciliation process for the victims of conflict in order to avoid the perpetuation of violence by a generation that has lost its standards. In that regard, the rehabilitation and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict through appropriate programmes is crucial to efforts to ensure lasting peace and security. Specific action in that area helps break the vicious cycle of violence and can serve as a tremendous instrument for conflict prevention.

The Security Council is regularly called upon to review the mandates of peace operations, modify them or decide to put an end to them. The transitional phases resulting from those developments can lead to periods of fragility for the State in question. Belgium therefore pleads for better articulation of the activities of peacekeeping operations with the rest of the United Nations system, particularly during times of transition. Belgium also advocates that transition and exit strategies should be adequately articulated around political processes, which should include the processes of demobilization, disarmament, reintegration, security-sector reform, transitional justice and institution-building, as well as capacity-building.

The Security Council can contribute in several ways to the goal of peacebuilding. It begins with the inclusion in the text of its statements and resolutions of concepts emphasizing the inclusiveness of such a global approach. Whether it is women, children or minorities, a specific mention can make a difference. Moreover, its positions, whether to support a mediation process or a peace agreement, or to condemn the lack of progress, have an impact. The example of the Security Council's support for the Arusha Peace Accords is a positive illustration of that.

Finally, the use of mediation as an instrument for the prevention and resolution of conflicts must become more systematic. Belgium fully supports the Secretary-General's work on mediation and advocates increasing the capacity of regional organizations in that field. Belgium also calls for women to play an active role in the mediation and conflict-resolution processes in their countries. I would like to take this opportunity to point out that Belgium will organize, on 14 February in Brussels, a high-level international conference on the subject of mediation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the Swedish presidency and in thanking Foreign Minister Wallström for setting a very ambitious agenda from the start and for this particular debate, which promotes reflection on the vision of the Secretary-General.

My country would like to align itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, and in my national capacity, I would like to make the following statement.

We welcome the Secretary-General's first priority, namely, to promote a surge in diplomacy for peace in order to resolve ongoing conflicts and prevent others from erupting. A holistic vision and strategic decisions on the part of the new leadership are critical in order to counter the static stance that the United Nations has taken on early action, along with its frequent failures to prevent or resolve conflicts, as we saw in Syria, Ukraine, Georgia and other places.

Georgia welcomes the effort to build a new political consensus in support of maintaining peace and security worldwide by preventing conflicts before they occur, which is in line with the concept of sustaining peace and which underlines the imperative of addressing all stages of the conflict cycle. Georgia shares the view of many on the importance of early action and proactive work on the part of United Nations entities, both at Headquarters and in the field, across the main pillars of the United Nations system, to identify early warning signs and address the risks confronting peace. Let me recall the pledges and commitments undertaken by Member States at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 with a view of preventing conflicts and stress, where we agreed that sustaining peace can only be achieved through joint determination and adherence to the principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

We view peace prospects as directly linked to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the international community's continuous focus on strengthening human rights. As a strong supporter of greater involvemen by women in preventing conflicts, we also place particular emphasis on the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Noting that the Security Council has a unique responsibility in the area of peace and security and conflict prevention, Georgia has had its own sad experience, from which we should all learn valuable lessons about what happens when a permanent member of the Security Council, a party to the conflict, singlehandedly vetoes the presence of an United Nations observer mission as an international monitoring mechanism. That can take place right after a full-scale war, at a time when the international security presence should be increased, as was the case with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in 2009. Since then, both Georgia and the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are under illegal military occupation by the Russian Federation, continue to be completely closed off from international monitoring mechanisms. Following several waves of ethnic cleansing, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, and, in the absence of international monitoring mechanisms, the humanitarian situation in the occupied regions remains critical. People are deprived of their basic human rights and freedoms, including, but not limited to, the freedom of movement. Given that experience, Georgia believes that the veto right should be restricted so as to prevent its misuse.

When a permanent member is involved in a conflict under consideration by the Security Council, it cannot exercise its veto right impartially. That is the only way that we can prevent mass violations of human rights and further escalation of conflict. In the same vein, Georgia has also endorsed the joint French-Mexican proposal regarding the use of the veto in the Security Council, as well as the initiative introduced by Liechtenstein on a code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Those concepts have been presented to the Council, and now it would be expedient, in our view, to develop the relevant procedural rules to accomplish those goals.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Ms. Flores Herrera (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we wish to congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members of the Security Council and wish them success.

Today we are witnessing various firsts. This is the first open debate of the Security Council in this first month of 2017, with Sweden, a small State with the first declared feminist Government, presiding. Our thanks go to Minister Wallström for her introductory words and for convening this meeting. This is also the first meeting with Secretary-General Guterres, who has been insisting on the importance of preventive diplomacy. It is high time to hear fresh and innovative arguments about what is already a long-standing topic of debate.

When I have the opportunity to show the United Nations to my guests, an obligatory stop is the disarmament section of the displays on the third floor behind the General Assembly, where a bubble chart is displayed, which makes a graphic comparison between the global budget for militarization, the regular budget of the United Nations, the size of official development aid and the budget for disarmament. There is nothing more discouraging for the peace agenda than comparing the sizes of the bubbles, which show that we have our priorities inverted.

The efforts of the international community for peacekeeping operations are mostly directed through military agreements. Instead, resources should be directed largely to actions for conflict prevention. As Secretary-General Guterres said, development is the best antidote to conflict. An increase in preventive diplomacy would ensure linkages between the three pillars of the United Nations and would focus on where they intersect. There is no issue that has a more negative impact on the United Nations reputation vis-à-vis the public than its inability to prevent atrocities. How can we therefore move from an eminently reactive Security Council agenda to a proactive agenda? How can we move from reacting to crises to preventing conflicts?

The Charter of the United Nations promises to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Fortunately, wars among States are becoming increasingly fewer, but we are seeing a critical situation around the world owing to the rise of complex and violent conflicts, which extend beyond borders and trigger massive displacements of people and have led to large-scale human rights violations, with women, children and girls as the main victims.

That situation, which is significantly different from what the Organization faced 70 years ago, requires effective preventive action by the Security Council as the guarantor of peace. Article 33 of the Charter refers to instruments designed to settle conflicts through peaceful means, which, as the Security Council itself acknowledged in resolution 2171 (2014), are not used sufficiently. Among those instruments is the recognition of the role that women play in peacekeeping. That role should be substantially increased.

Similarly, we are at the threshold of new leadership in the person of the Secretary-General. Now is the time, therefore, to lay the groundwork for effective interaction with the Security Council that prioritizes analysis and early warnings, which could lead to preventive political missions. To do that, we must strengthen our relationship with the Human Rights Council and make that tie constant and close. That body, through its reports and resolutions, can facilitate the work of the Security Council by providing early warnings of human rights violations.

For complex problems, there are no linear solutions, but rather multisectoral ones. There is no horizontal or vertical approach, but a matrix-oriented approach. Panama has been insisting on the need for a change in the paradigm so that ethics can provide the main criterion that the Organization uses in order to humanize its agendas, promote solidarity and make the action of all United Nations bodies transparent, in particular the Security Council.

In order to effectively prevent conflicts and move towards lasting peace, the Security Council needs to have a stronger analytical capacity and be proactive with regard to preventing potential risks. The Council should involve the parties to conflicts or parties potentially at risk in the elaboration of comprehensive implementation, monitoring and resource-allotment strategies. Involving parties bolsters trust and ultimately provides stronger guarantees of peace. The Security Council should have a more balanced power structure, so that narrow interests do not prevail, which only makes it more difficult to have an independent analysis in the search for solutions. The Security Council should also work hand in hand with other bodies of the United Nations system.

Today we have an opportunity to establish new standards and to create a vision in which the United Nations maintains leadership in comprehensive strategies to assist the parties to conflict or parties who are potentially at risk, thereby ensuring international peace and security, an essential ingredient for the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with which we are striving to transform the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Akbaruddin (India): I begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, and the other new members who joined the Security Council earlier this month. I also thank the Secretary-General for passionately outlining his vision and ideas for furthering conflict prevention and sustaining peace in his maiden address to the Council.

Today's agenda relates to one of the primary purposes in the Charter of the United Nations, one that is listed in the first Article. We are therefore grateful to the delegation of Sweden for proactively initiating this debate and for preparing the useful concept note (S/2017/6, annex).

The wisdom of the age-old adage, prevention is better than cure, is self-evident. At the United Nations, your compatriot, Mr. President, former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, is said to have been the first to introduce the term "preventive diplomacy" more than 50 years ago into our lexicon. The Agenda for Peace of former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, unveiled in the 1990s, comes to mind as another milestone in that saga. Yet efforts at prevention have failed to lay down firm institutional roots. That raises the question therefore — why have we not got it right? Is it because we do not have the right tools or is it that we are using the right tools in the wrong way? It is from that perspective that we offer a few of our views.

First, India believes that, for the United Nations to develop a culture of conflict prevention, it needs to recognize that the primary responsibility for sustaining peace lies with Member States. The United Nations can supplement what are essentially home-grown processes. The emphasis on analytical instruments and tools, such as fact-finding, agenda-setting, diplomatic initiatives and peace operations, is valuable, but represents too narrow an approach. Such efforts can, at best, supplement the roles and situations of the Member States concerned. Yet we provide too few resources to strengthen the institutional inadequacies of Member States, and instead we focus on strengthening the institutional arrangements of the United Nations.

Secondly, prevention efforts can be effective only if they are undertaken with the consent and cooperation of the Member States concerned and are not seen as an imposition. After all, such efforts are aimed at helping the Member States concerned to do what can be done and to understand how it can be done. As the saying goes, you cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.

Thirdly, we need to remember that, while the mandate provided in the Charter of the United Nations is vast, the United Nations cannot do it all by itself. There can be, and are, actors at the local, national, subregional and regional levels that may be in a better position to deal with a situation and can manage the issues better. The United Nations needs to recognize and act after taking into account the diversity of situations and the availability of instruments. Fourthly, talk of promoting sustainable peace and preventing conflicts will cut little ice if there are no resources to back it. The sustaining peace resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council in April last year (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262) did not lead to agreement, even on the allocation of 1 per cent of the annual peacekeeping budget to those activities. Are we now ready to change that mindset?

Fifthly, the established international order is being upended through economic, political and technological shifts. Even long-established States are unable to fully respond to the new factors and forces that are being unleashed. History teaches us that ungoverned swathes often become grounds for competition, or become storehouses for the germination of new threats. Ye, we have no global governance architecture in frontier areas, such as cyberspace, outer space and the oceans. We ignore them at our peril.

Sixthly, while the world is changing, the institutional architecture primarily responsible for the areas of peace and security remains frozen. The Security Council, which takes decisions on behalf of "we the peoples", represents an increasingly small minority of the world's population. If it is to make rules for "the peoples", it needs to adequately reflect new realities. Addressing the new issues, threats and challenges of the twenty-first century requires an updated, not an outdated instrument. A Security Council that has lost its legitimacy cannot be an effective tool for addressing the challenges of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Putting the sustaining peace agenda on a firm footing requires a coherent and comprehensive strategy. I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate as a contribution to that noble objective.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. AlJarallah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council during the first month of your membership. Despite the tremendous responsibility on your shoulders, we are confident that you will have a successful presidency. We also thank you, Sir, for preparing the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) on the subject of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

We would also like to congratulate the other new members, namely, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Italy and Kazakhstan. We wish them luck. We would also like to thank His Excellency Secretary-General Guterres for his valuable briefing, which outlined his vision for conflict prevention. We hope that, during his mandate as Secretary-General, we will be able to achieve tangible progress in activating preventive diplomacy. Kuwait stands ready to work with the Secretary-General to achieve his vision on peace and security in the Middle East and around the world.

Our world today faces profound humanitarian tragedies and suffering that have worsened alarmingly over the past several years. The number of civil wars has increased from four in 2008 to 11 in 2015, which has resulted in more than 128 million persons who have been affected by conflicts, displacement and natural catastrophes, and more than 60 million persons have been displaced or become refugees as a result of wars and conflict. The humanitarian appeal for 2017 launched by the United Nations to raise $22 billion — a record amount — illustrates the dangerous crisis that we are facing. Today's topic could not therefore be more timely. With the beginning of the new year and the mandate of the new Secretary-General, we have an opportunity to work together towards achieving that goal and make 2017 a year of peace.

Over the past several years, the Security Council and the international community have faced numerous challenges and conflicts. We need to deal with those conflicts in a creative way. We need to work in accordance with the principle of preventive diplomacy to address the root causes of those conflicts, especially economic causes, such as poverty and unemployment, and social causes, such as the absence of justice and the existence of human rights violations. We must also draw constructive lessons from past experience. We must focus on preventing conflict instead of addressing its political, humanitarian, economic and social implications. I am speaking specifically about the work of the Security Council, which must shoulder its responsibility to maintain international peace and security in dealing with conflicts after they break out. That exacts a large cost from the international community. I must point out that, over the past several years, the Security Council has been unable to deal with many of the issues before it, chief among them being the Palestinian question, which has been an agenda item for more than 70 years, and the Syrian crisis, which has entered its sixth year and has claimed the lives of more than 400,000 people. That shows the inability of the Council to address the consequences of many conflicts and to ensure that they are contained and do not worsen.

Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations addresses the peaceful settlement of conflicts and the benefits that we can derive from peaceful negotiations and mediation aimed at reaching peaceful settlements. Article 99 of the Charter ensures that the Secretary-General has the right to alert the Council to any matter that he believes might endanger international peace and security. We believe that it is important to remove all obstacles to that function and to enhance the resources available to the Secretary-General and the Secretariat so that they can warn us of any potential conflict. We must strengthen partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, which play a pivotal role in bolstering international peace and security.

The road towards the achievement of permanent peace is full of dangers. We cannot walk down that road if we do not walk together and if we lack a common vision. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, has a historical and moral responsibility to meet the needs of the millions of people affected by conflicts throughout the world. We agree with the Secretary-General that we must improve our efforts to prevent conflicts before they emerge, and not merely address those conflicts by trying to contain them, because we know that such an approach has a high financial, political and human cost.

It seems appropriate to me, during the Swedish presidency of the Security Council, to conclude my statement with a quotation from the late Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on how the quest for peace must be an ongoing process:

> "The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors,

its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned."

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, on behalf of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, we congratulate your country, Sir, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, as well as the new non-permanent members of the Council. Likewise, we appreciate the convening of this very important open debate and the concept note (S/2017/6, annex), which was diligently circulated. We thank the Secretary-General for his participation in this meeting and for the important remarks that he contributed, and we reiterate the support and full cooperation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for his stewardship of the Organization.

In recent years, the evolution of the situation on the ground throughout the world has transformed the nature of conflicts and threats to international peace and security, which today include not only bellicose confrontations but also encompass economic, financial and technological dimensions that negatively impact the stability of countries, owing to new challenges that violate the sovereignty of those countries and run contrary to the principle of non-interference in countries' internal affairs. The seriousness and complexity of the challenges posed require a determined approach by the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, so as to enable Member States to agree on new multilateral approaches and adequate responses, within the framework of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to situations that may arise from those new threats to the sovereignty and political independence of countries.

Threats to international peace and security resulting from terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, prolonged conflicts and unresolved colonial situations, as well as the cases of violence and destabilization that have recently arisen in the Middle East and North Africa, require strong political will and willingness on the part of Member States to conduct their international relations in the framework of equality and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, without interference in their internal affairs, and with a commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts. It is no secret that the Organization, in particular the Security Council, reacts reflexively when faced by conflicts, favouring the use of short-term military and sanctions measures instead of political actions that could address the root causes of the problems. Moreover, most often, permanent members of the Council are implicated and participate directly in conflicts, providing military and financial support to one of the sides involved, thereby rendering it enormously difficult for the Council to take action.

Therefore, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, particularly longstanding ones, such as the Palestinian question and outstanding colonial situations in various areas of the world, such as the question of Western Sahara, the last colony in Africa, must remain an essential aspect of the work of the Organization, in particular the Security Council, whose responsibility to maintain international peace and security gives rise to its ineluctable obligation to deal with conflicts. Often the consideration of such conflicts has been deferred with regard to their solution but has often been suppressed in the Council by the inaction of some permanent members that put their national interests before collective action that would promote the interests of multilateralism.

A reflection of that reality has been the prolonged Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting from Israel's illegal occupation of the territory of the State of Palestine. Seventy years have passed without the realization of the legitimate and just aspirations for self-determination of the Palestinian people, whose rights, which should be expressed in the form of a sovereign, free and independent State, have been violated by the occupying Power with the support of members of the Security Council. We also see a similar situation in the Western Sahara, which has been occupied by Morocco for 25 years since the referendum that was promoted by resolution 690 (1991).

Moreover, the settlement of conflicts and the goal of sustainable peace include a whole range of political and institutional activities and long-term development, which seek to address the profound causes of conflicts and prevent those root causes from surfacing or resurfacing, as well as bring about lasting peace. Last year, the peacebuilding architecture was the subject of reflection on how the United Nations should be dealing with this issue. My country, during its presidency of the Security Council, took that opportunity to contribute to the discussion through the convening of an open debate on peacebuilding held on 23 February 2016 (see S/PV.7629).

Achieving sustainable peace will be possible only to the extent that we address the root causes of conflicts. In this regard, we must place greater emphasis on relaunching sustainable economic development in countries that have just emerged from or might fall back into conflict situations. We cannot claim to be sustaining peace when we ignore the need of peoples to overcome their most basic socioeconomic problems, obtain the means to earn a living and lay the foundations for inclusive development and social justice.

Despite the fact that the majority of countries in post-conflict situations take some 20 years to recover their capacities, international financing drops off after the first four to eight years. This is due to the fact that many bilateral or multilateral assistance packages set conditions with regard to quality of governance and institutional capacity, which very few countries in these terrible circumstances cannot satisfy fully. Capacity cannot be generated overnight, and solutions are not quite as simple as some seem to think, given the institutional weakness of countries emerging from conflict. To grasp the particular circumstances of such countries is especially important. International financial institutions and donor countries must keep this in mind and offer assistance and aid in a more flexible and sustained manner. Countries emerging from conflict can take a long time to recover, and that process can be a stop-and-start one. But international assistance must be sustained and continue over the long term. That is the only way in which root causes can be dealt with and the vicious circle of conflict broken.

We cannot but warn that any intervention that promotes the dismantling of State institutions, as, unfortunately, happened in Iraq, Libya and Syria, is counterproductive in terms of achieving a sustainable long-term peace, as it promotes the expansion of extremist and terrorist groups on a country's territory. The creation of resources at the national level is therefore vital to sustainable peace.

Finally, all of these steps are key to giving countries emerging from conflict the capacities necessary to prevent any replapse into conflict and build a sustainable peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mrs. Arrieta Munguia (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank Sweden for having convened this very timely debate and express to all members of the Security Council our hope that 2017 will be a year of peace, as called for by the Secretary-General. Mexico hopes that under the leadership of Secretary-General Guterres, the Organization will effectively and in a timely way address the current challenges on the international peace and security agenda. We fully agree with his vision of linking the pillars of international security and development as a meaningful path towards prevention.

That is why, given the current evolution of armed conflicts, it is essential to make urgent and innovative changes to the tools that the Organization has at its disposal to prevent them, through a focus on the underlying causes of such conflicts.

Unfortunately, the Security Council has sought to resolve and manage conflicts and has not really focused on preventing them. This has resulted in very high monetary costs and a significant loss of life. However, conflict prevention is also the responsibility of the Organization as a whole. We must create a paradigm shift so that people experiencing and suffering from situations of conflict or post-conflict can be the protagonists of public policies that strive to achieve the well-being of societies in the long term.

The involvement of the Secretary-General directly or through his envoys or special representatives is vital to early warning of conflicts and could be key in prevention efforts. Enabling the Secretary-General to request advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice could be a valuable instrument of preventive diplomacy that would strengthen the work of the Secretariat within the framework of the purposes of the Charter.

The adoption of historic resolutions — General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) — has demonstrated that both the Assembly and the Council are committed to guiding the Organization's work on the basis of sustainable peace, and the concept has also been incorporated in the programme of work of the Secretary-General.

Mexico has supported the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace, and in this context we look forward to working with the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council in the coming years to gain a better understanding of the potential of this conceptual and systemic challenge, especially given the fragmentation of the work of the Organization. This, of course, requires the active and meaningful participation of the principal organs of the United Nations as well as of the Secretariat, agencies, funds, programmes, specialized agencies and United Nations field operations.

This paradigm shift should lead to the achievement of international peace and security not only as ends in themselves, but rather as a way to prevent social and humanitarian disasters caused by wars. This would mean moving from a culture of non-interference to one of non-indifference, particularly when it comes to human suffering.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Kickert (Austria): Let us make 2017 a year for peace. The Secretary-General's appeal is crisp and clear. The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. If it takes this responsibility seriously, it must shift its focus to prevention rather than on the management of conflicts, because when conflicts erupt, human suffering has already begun.

Conflict prevention is as necessary as it is notoriously difficult. It is also thankless, as, when successful, it mostly goes unnoticed by the public eye. Since the 2015 reports on peace operations, peacebuilding, and women, peace and security, the concept of conflict prevention as an essential element of achieving sustained peace has gained more traction than ever before. The question we are all grappling with is how to put it into practice.

Allow me to focus on five areas in which the United Nations could become more effective in preventing conflict.

In order to remain credible, the Security Council has a legal and moral obligation to prevent mass atrocities. We therefore encourage all its members to support the code of conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, as elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group and already signed by 112 Member States.

Secondly, the Secretary-General has a mandate to play a proactive role in warning the Security-Council when international peace and security are threatened. We encourage him, as many speakers before me have done, to do so proactively whenever necessary. In this regard, we are heartened by the organizational changes introduced by the Secretary-General to place more emphasis in his Office on conflict prevention.

Thirdly, regional organizations, under Chapter VIII of the Charter, play an increasing role in prevention and in sustaining peace. In 2017, Austria will make its contribution by chairing the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). As a regional organization created in the midst of the Cold War as a first platform for cooperation on a then-divided continent, it continues to play a vital role in preventing and addressing conflicts in the region.

In 2017, the OSCE region faces many challenges that are exacerbated by a lack of trust and growing radicalization and violent extremism. The Austrian chairmanship will focus its energy on using established formats as well as informal and alternative channels of communication to advance negotiated solutions to the conflicts in the region. Foreign Minister Kurz will be in New York in February to present the priorities and work plan of the Austrian chairmanship-in-office to the Security Council.

Fourthly, effective prevention work needs to start at the regional and country levels. Nothing is more helpful than being in the field and knowing the actors. To that end, it is necessary to decentralize in order to further strengthen regional offices and United Nations Resident Coordinators and their teams. The root causes for conflict are often multidimensional; they may be economic, political or related to persistent violations of minority or women's rights. The United Nations and its partners must be able to address those root causes as part of a broader conflict prevention effort. In that context, the Human Rights Up Front initiative is crucial, as human rights abuses are the early warning signs of upcoming conflicts.

Fifthly, where United Nations peace missions are deployed we need more proactive procedures to adapt them to changing local needs in order to prevent a recurrence of conflict after withdrawal. Partnerships between host Governments and international partners need to be strengthened when missions are phased out, in order to ensure the sustainability of peace. The current peacebuilding architecture must become much more flexible in support of such efforts.

Let me conclude by thanking you, Mr. President, for making prevention and sustaining peace a priority of your presidency and of Sweden's membership of the Security Council. Let me assure you of Austria's support.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Moldova.

Mr. Lupan (Republic of Moldova): I shall read out an abridged version of my statement in order to save time, as you have requested, Mr. President. The full version has been distributed.

As has been mentioned in Security Council and in the Secretary-General's 2015 report (S/2015/682), these are difficult times to talk about conflict prevention, with conflicts and lawlessness persisting in various parts of the world, including Eastern Europe.

My country is observing those trends with distress because, on 2 March, we will commemorate 25 years since the beginning of the armed conflict in the eastern regions of the Republic of Moldova. There were no early warning mechanisms in the Republic of Moldova in 1992. The support of the international community might have proved crucial at that time. Hence, in line with resolution 2171 (2014), we believe that sound early-warning mechanisms might need to receive greater consideration in the future as actual first steps of conflict prevention. Moreover, the role of the media in this context merits a separate discussion in the Security Council.

For 25 years, the Republic of Moldova, with the support of its external partners, has been promoting a resolution to the Transnistrian conflict, being determined to reach a peaceful and sustainable result. Moldovan authorities continue to strive to prevent any escalation of the conflict. However, in 2016 we saw for the first time military exercises conducted by the separatists, together with the military forces of a United Nations State Member. Such an experience proves that external interference is often not a stabilizing factor. Foreign military forces cannot enter Moldovan territory unless mandated by the United Nations or its organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Republic of Moldova's efforts should focus instead on building bridges between communities and establishing a favourable environment for a peaceful solution, on the basis of the United Nations principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. The same applies to other conflicts as well. Therefore, our firm belief is that the existing peacekeeping mechanism in our case should be adjusted to the current realities and transformed into a compact, multinational civilian mission. Such a step would support two important conflict prevention and resolution activities from a United Nations perspective: an increased role for both regional organizations and for confidence-building measures. In the case of the Republic of Moldova therefore, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could provide the international legitimacy, impartiality and a tailor-made mandate that, in addition to monitoring and verification, could include activities related to confidence-building and public order.

In that connection, and with the support of the 2016 German OSCE chairmanship, a substantive meeting took place in Bavaria allowing for progress in confidence-building measures that focus on the development side of conflict resolution and are implemented with the support of the United Nations. We therefore take this opportunity to suggest that the application of such confidence-building measures at the grass-roots level has great potential in future conflict prevention activities of the United Nations, particularly with a focus on development.

While recalling resolution 2171 (2014), the Republic of Moldova supports the idea that conflicts could be prevented through the inclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals philosophy in such processes. What we would like to see is not only the right wording of such resolutions, but also their implementation. We support the new Secretary-General in his determination to act accordingly.

Finally, the small States of the United Nations follow the Security Council's successes and failures with regard to international law, and many past and current conflicts are a clear signal of the need for Security Council reform and for respect for United Nations principles of international law to which we all have subscribed. That is an element that can improve conflict prevention governance at the United Nations and can strengthen the mediation, peacebuilding and resolution components of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al Owais (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to Sweden for convening this open debate. The United Arab Emirates emphasizes the importance of today's discussions.

We condemn the terrorist attack on the Kandahar Governor's guest house, which injured the United Arab Emirates Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and a number of Emirati diplomats who were accompanying him on a humanitarian mission under the United Arab Emirates programme to support the brotherly Afghan people to end conflicts and sustain peace.

Today's meeting is a critical first step towards building an important relationship between the new Secretary-General and the Security Council. Having such dynamic, strong linkages between the Secretary-General and this organ is integral to utilizing and maximizing the United Nations tools for prevention. We would like to thank the Secretary-General for sharing his vision earlier today and for revitalizing conflict prevention across the United Nations. We endorse his call for a diplomacy of peace and stand ready to support all his efforts in that regard.

Nowhere is there a need for conflict prevention greater than in the Middle East, our region. It is urgently needed. We sense the grave impact of violence and instability. The persistent conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Libya and Palestine, among other protracted conflicts in the region, have implications for the security of countries near and far, as they fuel a state of global instability and undermine international security. It is high time to find political solutions to those conflicts, with the aim of building sustainable and resilient societies in our region.

We believe that there is a very clear connection between extremist ideologies and terrorist acts. Those acts must be addressed simultaneously, through a comprehensive, long-term approach. The narrative of extremists is in stark contrast to the United Arab Emirates model as a modern, progressive Arab society. It is also in contrast to the Middle East as we envision it — a vibrant tapestry of cultures and backgrounds coexisting in peace.

For too many years, the international community has managed humanitarian political crises only by minimizing their impacts, instead of truly finding solutions to them and preventing them from occurring. We would encourage taking strong measures to prevent such crises. The list of conflicts is too long, their nature is too complex, the actors involved are unconventional, the magnitude of lives lost and humanitarian need is too staggering for us to continue to avoid confronting crises head on.

The United Arab Emirates adopts a comprehensive approach that has human beings as a pillar. We try to address all aspects, not only economic factors. We invest in our people by encouraging women and youth to be active members in protecting our communities by empowering them and providing them with the necessary tools and opportunities. We also try to prevent the recurrence of conflict by rebuilding institutions and infrastructure and by underscoring the rule of law.

At this critical juncture, we hope that there is scope for renewed multilateral, regional and bilateral cooperation. In that connection, the United Arab Emirates is pleased to offer recommendations to the Security Council with the aim of ensuring progress and results in preventing conflicts and maintaining international peace and security.

First, the Security Council must better consult with regional organizations and countries concerned. Regional organizations are often closer to conflicts and have a special understanding of their dynamics.

Secondly, crisis prevention must start with addressing the roots causes that lead to violence and instability. The United Arab Emirates is dedicating its efforts to countering violent extremism and terrorism. We firmly believe that we must combat extremism before it becomes violent.

Thirdly, we call upon the members of the Security Council to work together to achieve the best outcomes that would benefit the world at large. All States Members of the United Nations must fully benefit from all the tools available to prevent conflicts, as outlined in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate Sweden on its election to the Security Council. We wish it all success in stewarding the Council for the rest of the month.

The President: I wish to express to the representative of the United Arab Emirates my sympathies with regard to the injuries sustained today by his colleagues in the course of the horrendous attacks in Afghanistan.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Sabarullah Khan (Sri Lanka): Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Sweden on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, as well as to join other speakers in commending the Foreign Minister of Sweden and her delegation for convening today's timely debate. We acknowledge with appreciation the remarks of the Secretary-General earlier today on this important topic, and we take this opportunity to wish the Council a blessed and peaceful new year.

As we embark upon a new year, we do so mindful of the fact that both as an international community and as a multilateral organization, in terms of resources, we have been served with a multitude of challenges. However, those challenges are not insurmountable. Together as one body, with one voice, with unwavering resolve and, most important, with political will, we can face the future and steer our world towards peace and prosperity for all.

We welcome the incoming Secretary-General's identification of a surge in diplomacy for peace as one of his priorities.We appreciate his efforts to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Secretariat in that area by establishing an executive committee to support decision-making at the senior level, while taking steps to enhance performance in the peace and security pillar and to reconfigure the Office of the Secretary-General so as to place more emphasis on strategic integration across pillars.

On 21 September last year, Sri Lanka, together with several other countries, co-hosted a successful pledging conference to refinance the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund to support United Nations peacebuilding efforts across the globe. Sri Lanka has been working closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office since January 2015, when the Government prioritized reconciliation and development as twin agendas to be pursued in guiding our nation towards durable peace.

The challenges faced by the international community arising from terrorism, violent conflict, human rights abuse, poverty, disease and the destruction of cultures must be faced by all the principal organs of the United Nations working actively to set up a collective security firewall, in accordance with their respective functions under the Charter of the United Nations. In order to face such phenomena, it is imperative that we work as one United Nations.

The Security Council, including its permanent members, has in its tool kit powerful instruments to address matters of international peace and security, and it must use those tools with circumspection and only in the cause of humankind. At this time, when self-absorption and self-importance have reared their heads, the United Nations must fiercely promote its values of commonality, humanity and the good of all.

To address the new threats, our peacekeeping operations must also adapt and acquire specialized capabilities. When possible, the countries receiving peacekeepers should take ownership of the process. We must focus on building national institutions, strengthening national security structures and addressing issues of restorative justice and reconciliation, if peace is to be sustained. Establishing the rule of law is fundamental to achieving durable peace in the aftermath of conflict. It is also vital that women be included at all levels of peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It is well known that women and men experience conflict differently and, as a result, understand peace differently.

Sri Lanka is a country that successfully eradicated terrorism after suffering under its yoke for nearly 30 years. Today we have embarked on a journey of reconciliation, restorative justice and inclusive and lasting peace. Let our nation serve as a beacon of hope to the world as we, the international community, face the many challenges ahead.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I would like to congratulate all of the new members of the Security Council, and Sweden in particular as President of the Council in the very first month of its mandate and for organizing today's timely open debate on such an ever-pressing and current issue.

My statement is fully aligned with that delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union.

Today we heard Mr. António Guterres address the Council for the first time as Secretary-General. Portugal shares his aspiration for a surge in diplomacy for peace and supports his vision and priorities. As the Secretary-General has often emphasized, global problems require global solutions, and the United Nations is at the centre of a tremendous multilateral effort needed to effectively address global terrorism, climate change, dire humanitarian crises and parallel movements of migrants and refugees.

The primacy of politics, mediation and prevention across all stages of conflicts, stronger partnerships, nationally driven conflict prevention and resolution, improved United Nations missions on the ground and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency and accountability throughout the United Nations system are all goals to which we remain bound. We all know that human rights violations are often a warning sign. Human rights and the protection of civilians, and women and children in armed conflict, must remind us of our endeavours in sustaining peace. Sharpening the focus on prevention also means a sharper focus on inclusiveness, involving all the relevant actors, communities and stakeholders, including women, youth, religious leaders and minority groups.

Preventing the lapse and relapse into conflict must include both the political and economic empowerment of women. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace can emerge only from within societies, which means national ownership. That often requires assistance in building national capacities, strengthening domestic institutions and supporting good governance. The response to multidimensional and cross-border demands also requires complementary partnerships of all kinds.

The absence of development puts peace and security at risk, and the opposite is also true. That is why the primacy of politics and sustainable development must be continually mutually reinforcing. In that regard, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development must be an integral and essential dimension of sustaining peace. Incorporating a culture of prevention and sustaining peace system-wide requires the efforts of all United Nations bodies and entities across the three pillars and demands close and proactive institutional cooperation. The United Nations family will be able to act in a transversal manner in addressing conflict prevention only if it maximizes the best synergies among its organs, including in the framework of Article 99 of the Charter.

Portugal also looks forward to deepened and more effective cooperation with regional organizations and with the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), which can help to bring a peacebuilding perspective to the deliberations of the principal organs of the United Nations. The PBC is also well positioned to offer the Security Council additional advice and insight.

Strengthening coherence across the United Nations system and moving from silos to synergies is crucial to placing prevention at the very heart of the United Nations. Accordingly, we greatly welcome the decisions quickly taken by the Secretary-General to increase the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness. We are living in a time marred by the largest number of crises that have both security and humanitarian dimensions, unprecedented levels of displacement and human suffering, and it seems natural to demand that the United Nations do more and better, even if with less.

How can the Security Council support conflict prevention more effectively? In our view, the Council already has at its disposal a set of instruments that could be better used for the purpose, including discussions with the Secretary-General, horizon-scanning, early warning informal briefings by the Department of Political Affairs, Arria Formula meetings involving a diverse range of actors and stakeholders, interactive dialogues with regional partners and other United Nations organs, and regular discussions with troop- and police-contributing countries. Timely and clear statements, open debates, country field trips and démarches by the Council are other tools that could and should continue to be fully used in support of preventive diplomacy.

Continued reform of the Council's working methods, including greater transparency and burden-sharing among all members, will, in our opinion, also contribute to enhancing the Council's ability to focus on conflict and crisis prevention. Effective institutional cooperation, broad consultation and inclusiveness could also further contribute to improving the design of mission mandates. In addition, sustaining peace will require a more coherent, comprehensive, flexible and tailor-made approach to peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. However, such responsibility is not exclusive to the Council; all States must commit to and engage equally in that responsibility. Clearly, well-designed mandates, long-term commitments, robust and better-equipped field operations, more professional and well-trained peacekeepers and United Nations staff, greater accountability and transparency must all be pursued, but they will remain elusive if Member States collectively do not wholeheartedly embrace a culture of prevention and engage with the United Nations for an effectively delivery on the ground.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Mounzer (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to welcome you, Mr. President, as you preside over this important meeting. I would also like to express my congratulations to you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you and the permanent delegations of Ethiopia, Italy, Kazakhstan and Bolivia for assuming their responsibilities as non-permanent members of the Security Council.

My delegation is interested in discussing the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, on the basis of the principles, objectives and purposes of the Charter of the United nations, free from the practices of double standards, politicization of issues and the exacerbation of the phenomenon of investing in terrorism as a political weapon. That practice has been adopted by Governments of States inside the Security Council, in an attempt to achieve agendas that contradict the purposes of the Charter, to justify interference in the internal affairs of other States and violate their sovereignty and undermine their independence and territorial integrity. Over the past decade, that represented the gravest threat to international peace and security, creating hotspots for armed conflicts, extremism and terrorism. Examples are vivid in in all of our minds.

A review of the archives of United Nations resolutions in general, and Security Council resolutions in particular, proves that we do not lack resolutions or mechanisms or necessary mandates to maintain international peace and security. Instead, we lack the political will by the Governments of some States that continue, along with their allies, to consider themselves as tutors of the international Organization and authorities superior to international law. They refuse to abide by the provisions of the Charter and refrain from implementing resolutions of international legitimacy.

Despite the hundreds of resolutions of the General Assembly and the other Security Council resolutions, the Israeli occupation of Arab territories has continued for nearly half a century. Despite many resolutions on counter-terrorism unanimously adopted by the Security Council in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, which have provided broad mandates, flexible prerogatives and deterrent procedures that were supposed to ensure the eradication of terrorism, the scourge of terrorism is still spreading in numerous parts of the world.

My country, Syria, is still suffering from the terrorist war imposed upon it as the result of the failure of some States to abide by resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). Foreign terrorist fighters are still flowing in across borders. The Governments of some States are still providing declared financial, military and political support to terrorist groups. Those Governments are still sponsoring the extremist terrorist ideology by issuing fatwas for killing and destruction, providing platforms for preachers of mutiny and callers for hate while the wold is watching. Those Governments are still establishing camps to train those terrorists on their own territories, under the supervision of military and security experts from Governments of States, some of which are permanent members of the Security Council, and which were mandated by the Charter to maintain international peace and security.

I must stress that the misleading statements that the delegations of some States made in today's meeting about the reality of the terrorism faced by my country are no longer heard by the international community, and international public opinion has realized the truth about the involvement of the Governments of those countries in supporting armed terrorist groups and the emergence of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters

What we need today is to develop and activate the work of the United Nations to ensure that it carries out its role with integrity and seriousness as an international body that is mandated to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, while addressing the root causes of armed conflicts, committing to dialogue and political solutions and avoiding the threat of the use of force in international relations, in such a way to provide our peoples with safe, prosperous and peaceful lives. We also need to abide by the provisions and purposes and principles of the Charter. We should not ignore it or manipulate its provisions or derive from it new terms and concepts that run counter to its provisions and are still a source of deep controversy and disagreement among Member States.

That is due to the hidden purposes of the Governments of certain Member States in the use of terms such as "violent extremism", which have been put forward even before reaching an international consensus on a crystal-clear legal definition of terrorism. That is also the case for the "responsibility to protect", which the Governments of some States are trying to exploit to interfere in the internal affairs of other States and violate their sovereignty. Obviously, the term "moderate armed opposition" will not be the last such dangerous and abnormal phrase used by their authors to try to to deviate the United Nations from its purposes and principles.

In conclusion, my country, Syria, is still calling on the international community and the United Nations to take a clear and firm position that respects the Charter and its purposes, with regard to the use by the Governments of some states, notably the United States and the European Union, of unilateral economic coercive measures as a tool to bring political pressure to bear on certain developing countries, including my country, thereby targeting citizens in all aspects of their lives and whole segments of society, thereby undermining the ability of our community to bring about socioeconomic development. Putting an end to such coercive measures, which are illegitimate and coercive in nature, would in the end maintain the effectiveness and credibility of the Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

Ms. Drobič (Slovenia): Let me first thank the Swedish presidency for convening this open debate on confict prevention and sustaining peace.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union and with the statement delivered on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation. In addition, I would like to make a few remarks from my national point of view.

The global security environment has changed significantly in recent years. Multidimensional issues, such as terrorism, violent extremism and irregular migration, still represent challenges to the international community and its universal values and principles. To be able to tackle those and future challenges the emphasis must be on doing more collectively, effectively and in a timely manner. We need to overcome political divisions and show that the Security Council is able to respond when dire, protracted human suffering, injustice and breaches of international humanitarian law are happening.

People-centred and development-oriented approaches are important. All Governments have the responsibility to protect their own people and to sustain peace. All other entities of the international community — the United Nations, but also regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society actors — could, however, do more to support the most vulnerable and fragile countries, in particular by enhancing their societal resilience and security architecture.

One of the imperatives for the success of conflict prevention and for the maintenance of peace and security in and among States is full respect for international law and the rule of law. Their promotion at all levels is crucial for the realization of sustained economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger and the protection of human rights. Justice and reconciliation must be among the main focuses for all preventive and post-conflict activities. Attaining them by peaceful means, as stipulated in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, including through international courts and tribunals, must be our common endeavour.

We welcome the engagement in conflict prevention issues at the United Nations and commend the efforts in different parts of the United Nations system to significantly strengthen the Organization's capacities. We are glad to hear that the surge in diplomacy for peace will be one of the key priorities of the Secretary-General's mandate, and we appreciate today's presentation of his vision on how to achieve that goal.

In the future we need to be careful not to depart from multilateralism. We need to foster it, especially in preventive action. Cooperation and credible information-sharing on early warning and situational assessments among international actors must be stepped up, in particular with a comprehensive approach that encompasses humanitarian and development assistance, human rights and rule-of-law promotion, peacebuilding and other areas.

Slovenia is a traditional advocate of preventive diplomacy and preventive post-conflict mediation. In past years, we dedicated most of our efforts in this field to enhancing mediation in the Mediterranean region, especially by highlighting the priorities of actively engaging women and young people and respect for international law and the rule of law. We intend to continue pursuing those in the future.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Castañeda Solares (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Guatemala thanks the delegation of Sweden, which currently holds the presidency of the Security Council, for organizing this open debate and for presenting the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) on which it is based. We welcome Secretary-General António Guterres and thank him for his first statement as Secretary-General to the Council.

We align ourselves with the statement made earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

We share the notion set out in the concept note by the Council presidency that, despite the fact that the Organization's mandate is to prevent the outbreak of conflicts and engage at an early stage to prevent the escalation of violence, the reality is different. We also agree with the idea that the Council has disproportionately been occupied with addressing current crises rather than preventing the conflicts of tomorrow. Its approach has therefore been more reactive than preventive.

The Organization and its States Members have tools available to them that have a common denominator in the emphasis on the primacy of politics, indicating that sustainable peace is achieved through political solutions and not only through military and technical commitments. In that regard, Guatemala would like to emphasize the importance of working in a holistic manner over the long term to maintain peace in all the United Nations commitments before, during and after a conflict. We also stress that the United Nations must move from a linear approach to addressing conflicts to a focus on prevention that is continuous, cross-cutting and intersectoral.

Moreover, in the context of achieving sustainable peace, it should be noted that this new term shares common points with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, as noted in the concept note. The message is clear: we cannot talk about peace without development, and we cannot talk about development without talking about peace.

For Guatemala, sustainable peace has a direct relationship with investing in strengthening institutions, security sector reform and good governance. An example of that lies in the fact in our own country an agreement was reached with sectors of organized civil society that resulted in the creation of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), whose sole objective is to support the strengthening of national institutions in the judicial sector, in particular the Public Ministry.

With the support of CICIG, Guatemala is strengthening its institutions, the rule of law is working better and the citizenry is participating more actively, demanding accountability and supporting the fight against corruption and impunity. We emphasize that CICIG is a cooperation tool devised and designed by Guatemalans, which has been explicitly supported by five Government Administrations and by society in general in an explicit manner. For Guatemala, that is an example of working to implement sustainable peace together with our international partners.

Breaking down the silos within the Organization and among Member States is a clear challenge. But it is important to work with the idea of implementing the three fundamental pillars of the Charter of the United Nations together, in the sense that both peace and security, development and human rights should all be addressed in a cross-cutting manner as a whole. At the same time, the Council should not always wait for cases of conflict to be included in the agenda. We need to invest in prevention in order not to wait until conflicts erupt to take the necessary and pertinente measures.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the accession of the Kingdom of Sweden to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January, and I thank you for organizing this open debate and for choosing its theme. Issues pertaining to conflict prevention and sustaining peace are currently enjoying a very positive momentum, and we should, all together, take advantage of that in order to give concrete follow-up to your call for political and financial re-engagement on those priorities.

I also congratulate the Secretary-General on his briefing, which confirms his firm commitment to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I would like to say to the Secretary-General and to the members of the Security Council that Morocco continues to be committed to the universal values of peaceful conflict resolution and sustaining peace.

The multiplication of conflicts, their complexity and their disastrous consequences make it necessary to review the way in which the Organization deals with them. This debate also provides us today an opportunity to present new approaches and answers to the questions that remain for the implementation of the vision initiated two years ago by the processes to review the peace and security architecture, which resulted in the emergence of the new paradigm, namely, sustaining peace.

The resolution on the review of the peacebuilding architecture (resolution 2282 (2016)) led to a redefinition of sustainable peace through a more integrated, strategic and coherent approach, in which security, development and human rights are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. A comprehensive approach recognizes that sustaining peace is based, first, on conflict prevention and the elimination of its root causes by promoting sustained economic growth, lasting social development, strengthened social cohesion, the culture of democracy and human rights. Conflict prevention then becomes one of the strongest links in this new mechanism, namely, sustaining peace.

Often, the instruments available to the Secretary-General and to the Security Council set out in Chapter VI in the Charter of the United Nations, such as negotiation, mediation or arbitration, are not enough to avoid conflicts. As a result, traditional policies for preventing armed conflicts that seek only to reduce the intensity, duration and geographical extent of violence and, ultimately, to end it, have become inadequate.

The fact is that the underlying causes of conflicts often go neglected in the face of the urgency of ensuring a security and humanitarian response. But when strong institutions, the rule of law, and sufficient State capacity for minimum public services are lacking, conflicts, or relapses into conflict, are more likely to emerge. That is where we need a holistic vision and where the new concept of sustaining peace takes on its full meaning. According to this innovative approach, the strategy that enables a coherent, effective and legitimate culture of prevention to establish itself is one that tackles every aspect of the root causes of conflicts.

There are many stakeholders with an important role in addressing the root causes of conflict, including bilateral and multilateral partners and non-governmental organizations, as well as representatives of civil society, young people and women. Within the United Nations system, the various funds and programmes play a leading part in strengthening States' institutional capacities, as do regional and financial organizations.

Beyond that, several elements are required to implement the concept of sustaining peace, among them a change in the culture within the United Nations. We commend the Secretary-General on the steps he has already taken to reorganize various departments, and we believe firmly that they will help to revitalize prevention activities and improve the flow of information. This situation makes the role of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) crucial in functioning as a bridge between all the various actors. In accordance with the latest resolutions of the Security Council (resolution 2282 (2016)) and the General Assembly (resolution 70/262)) on the review of the peacebuilding architecture, the time has come to strengthen the PBC so that it can play its role to the full.

In conclusion, I would like to share two recommendations. First, some Member States see prevention activities as an attack on their countries' sovereignty or as interference in their States' internal affairs. To remedy that, we should clarify the principles of early warning and preventive action. A few years ago, the same misunderstanding afflicted the concept of the protection of civilians, and yet today it has become a sacred principle. Secondly, in order to ensure the success of sustaining peace, we should pay special attention to an operation's transition from peacekeeping to country team. Based on current experiences in Liberia, as well as in Mali and the Central African Republic, we could consider including support for country teams in the compulsory contribution funds while the missions are still deployed, in order to prepare for the transition as soon as that deployment begins.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate the new members of the Council — your country, Mr. President, as well as Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Italy — on their election, and to assure them of our full cooperation. Similarly, I offer my congratulations on the end of the Council term of the last remaining dictatorship in Latin America, Venezuela. That country has perverted the Council's mandate with a political and ideological agenda and an utter lack of interest in just causes, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. It is a self-proclaimed teacher of lessons about human rights when its own people live under oppression, torture, forced disappearances and imprisonment. Venezuela's representative talks of referendums when his own Government has refused its own people a referendum and prevents them from expressing their views democratically. The presence of such a representative, of such a country, in the Security Council tarnishes its image and weakens the Organization. Happily, it is gone. I am sorry for having digressed from my statement, but I had to respond to attacks on my country.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Roet (Israel): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and Sweden on joining the Security Council and presiding over its activity this month. I would also like to welcome the other new Council members and to wish them success in fulfilling their important role.

In 2016 the international community experienced an increasing threat of global terrorism, which indiscriminately claims innocent lives from Brussels to Baghdad and from Paris to Istanbul. In Israel, Palestinian terrorists have been responsible for numerous attacks. Men and women on their way to work, as well as children and the elderly waiting for their buses home, have all fallen victim to shootings, stabbings and other horrendous acts of terror. Just a few days ago, a terrorist drove his truck into a group of cadets gathered on a Jerusalem promenade, taking the lives of Yael Yekutiel, who was 20 years old, Shir Hajaj, 22, Shira Tzur, 20, and Erez Orbach, 20. Blessed be their memory. We thank the Secretary-General, the Council and the many countries that have expressed their condolences. Despite the evils of hate and terrorism that we face, Israel is, and will always remain, committed to the way of peace.

Our history has taught us that courage, impartiality and seeing reality for what it is are important elements in preventing conflict. More important, they are essential to establishing the ground for a durable peace. We believe that they are also vital to the work of the Security Council in its pursuit of global peace and security.

While it is clear that courage is needed in the conflicts that take place on the battlefield, courage is even more important in preventing them. For the Security Council, courage should mean not turning a blind eye to actions that pave the way for future conflict. For the Council, courage should mean its equal application of moral values and standards to all, without allowing politics and special interests to interfere in its work.

Sadly, that is not the case when the Council examines the actions of those who systematically try to harm the State of Israel. As a matter of fact, since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006), Hizbullah, which is internationally acknowledged to be a terrorist organization, has multiplied its missile stockpile tenfold and has amassed more than 150,000 rockets and missiles. We continue to see increases in the number of Hizbullah operatives, described in reports relating to resolution 1701 (2006) as "civilians", in possession of unauthorized weapons. The situation serves only to heighten tension in an already volatile environment.

It seems that political considerations undermine the Council's ability to receive accurate reports on the real situation on the ground. If conflict between Israel and Hizbullah is to be prevented, the Security Council must acknowledge Hizbullah's dangerous buildup in southern Lebanon and demand that the Governments of Lebanon and Iran fully comply with the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006).

Time and again we have warned the Security Council that, where the Middle East is concerned, we can be sure that wherever and whenever there is terrorism, there is Iran. We urge this new Council to put an end to Iran's destabilizing actions in our region and around the world.

For centuries, justice has been depicted as a woman wearing a blindfold, which represents the basic legal element in maintaining peace and order: impartiality. Unfortunately, on too many occasions this institution has lifted the blindfold where the State of Israel is concerned. Biases, hypocrisy and double standards — the same double standards that Secretary-General Guterres spoke of earlier today — have unfortunately become honorary members of the long debates and meetings condemning Israel. The Council's latest initiative, resolution 2334 (2016), epitomizes its failure to address all sides of a conflict equally. Its condemnation of Israeli actions and attempt to portray them as the one major obstacle to a two-State solution portrays the type of bias that hinders real diplomatic progress. It is clear that these biases are paralysing the Council and holding it back from playing a constructive role in conflict prevention.

Courageous and impartial actions to achieve sustainable peace must be based on facts, not on mere perceptions. Like the prisoners in Plato's famous allegory of the cave, some members of this institution refuse to see the facts, while indulging themselves in the comfort of the lies presented to them. One dire consequence of that dangerous behaviour is the failure to effectively identify the real aggressor. Almost every time the Council has condemned terror attacks against Israelis, it has avoided answering the most basic questions: who is the terrorist, and who is the victim? If we cannot make that simple differentiation, how can we even begin to solve the problem?

A new year offers us an opportunity to have a fresh start and to stand together for the true values of the Organization. It provides us with an opportunity to have the courage to face the facts, to call the aggressor by its name, to be impartial and to apply equally standards to all aspects of every conflict we face.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Nielsen (Denmark): Denmark aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union, as well as with the statement made on behalf of the Group of Friends of Mediation.

Denmark warmly thanks Sweden for convening this debate on a topic of extreme importance to the United Nations. In its broadest sense, prevention constitutes the bedrock of our cooperation. It is a shared strategic agenda that should guide and mobilize all parts of the United Nations system and Member States. Against that background, Denmark strongly supports the vision outlined today by the Secretary-General. We look forward to working with Mr. Guterres and his team to turn that new agenda into concrete actions and reforms that will make United Nations efforts for prevention and sustaining peace more effective.

Denmark firmly shares the view that the work of the Organization on conflict prevention, supporting political solutions and providing good offices and mediation must be further strengthened. The United Nations system must work on the basis of a common and integrated operational strategy for prevention and sustaining peace. We welcome the Secretary-General's ambition to improve coherence of the country-level work being undertaken by the Secretariat across departments. More predictable resources for prevention, including special political missions, will also be crucial. Denmark is a major donor to the Department of Political Affairs, and we will remain a close partner in the future.

As has been illustrated very clearly in today's debate, prevention and sustaining peace require much deeper and wider coordination of United Nations peace efforts. Denmark welcomes the Secretary-General's strong emphasis on enhancing coherence within the United Nations system. Denmark is a long-standing supporter of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and donor to the Peacebuilding Fund, which is a key tool in that regard.

The imperative must be to protect people and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights by States and non-State actors. Denmark has been among the core supporters of the Human Rights Up Front initiative and will remain committed to ensuring its further development as a critical instrument of the United Nations. Member States carry the primary responsibility for protecting populations from atrocity crimes, but the international community has a responsibility to act where States fail to do so. The Security Council must live up to its responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security and strengthen its leading role in prevention. Syria remains the most striking and heartbreaking recent example of the consequences when the Council fails to stop bloodshed and conflict.

The most effective prevention strategy is to address the causes and core drivers of conflict. Member States must ensure representative, legitimate and inclusive political and economic institutions, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Without effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we will not succeed.

Furthermore, the United Nations must make youth a strategic priority and give the leaders of tomorrow a much stronger role in prevention and sustaining peace. Through its development cooperation, Denmark is strongly engaged in the global youth agenda and stands ready to support the Secretary-General in creating opportunities for future generations and making sure that youth are included in decision-making. The strengths and capacities of young people must be met with optimism and opportunities. If not, we risk further marginalization, radicalization and frustration, fuelling violence and destabilization. Denmark looks forward to working with all partners to implement resolution 2250 (2015).

As we put behind us a year marked by conflict, violence, terrorism and human suffering around the world, the expectations for the Organization and its Secretary-General to deliver on the promise of the United Nations are high. We have a shared responsibility to make 2017 a year for multilateralism, common solutions and a strong United Nations prevention role.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Treppel.

Ms. Treppel (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), Mr. Luis Almagro, allow me to express our gratitude for the invitation to participate in this necessary and timely debate. On behalf of the General Secretariat of the OAS, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, on his appointment and to wish him every success in promoting peace, the rule of law, sustainable development, human rights and dignity for the millions of people around the world who demand it. The OAS can be counted on to shoulder that shared responsibility.

The OAS has the clear conviction that sustainable peace cannot be the exclusive result of military or other measures that exclude the communities in which they take place. We believe that sustainable peace is possible only as part of a multidimensional vision, with marked political sense and commitment, and inclusion and social cohesion.

We have worked hard in our region to free ourselves from this scourge. We are celebrating the recent signing of a peace agreement between the Government of Colombia, led by its President and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Juan Manuel Santos, and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), which ended the longest internal armed conflict in the history of the Western Hemisphere. Dialogue, mutual understanding and the good offices of different actors, including the OAS, made that possible.

Regional bodies act as facilitators for the realization of consensual solutions and as promoters of measures based on international cooperation and multilateralism. In that regard, we echo the need to strengthen and improve dialogue between regional organizations and United Nations bodies. We at the OAS have promoted dialogue based on stakeholder consensus, with a high degree of national ownership and leadership. The Americas have many cases of success, thanks to the implementation of mechanisms to resolve disputes in a peaceful manner and to prevent the escalation of violence. The Peace Fund, the consultative meetings of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and the forums on confidence- and security-building measures are part of the framework of the organization. The deployment of civilian missions with specific mandates has also yielded satisfactory results. Such missions include the mission to support the peace process in Colombia, the mission to support the fight against corruption and impunity in Honduras and the special mission in Haiti.

We know that the deep inequalities and poverty that afflict several countries in the region, as well as the marginalization and the forced migration of hundreds of thousands of people as the only option in the face of violence, serve as a haven for crime. We are aware that Governments and societies face many challenges in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace, but they are not insurmountable. We can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including sustainable peace, only by working together, by putting aside rhetoric and by taking concrete action using a multidimensional approach to governance and security that includes the resolve to include women and to ensure more rights for more people.

I reiterate the support and commitment of the OAS to build a world endowed with the security and development that millions of people today lack. I conclude by citing Rigoberta Menchú, an indigenous Guatemalan woman, a social advocate and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, who said that peace is not only the absence of war; as long as there is poverty, racism, segregation and exclusion, we can hardly achieve a world of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mrs. Natividad (Philippines): I wish to congratulate the new members of the Security Council and to thank Sweden for organizing during its presidency this open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for sharing his views on this topic this morning and for reminding us that conflict prevention and sustaining peace must be a priority for each one of us.

The promise of the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war continues to challenge us after 71 years. The tools and mechanisms at the disposal of Member States and the Security Council, particularly those outlined in Chapters VI and VII of the Charter, could better deliver on that promise, if they were fully utilized at an earlier stage, if they were used to encourage inclusivity, participation and ownership among all stakeholders in a conflict and if they were coupled with economic and social development, which would help to sustain peace.

For the Phillipines, a country that has witnessed armed conflicts that have spanned many generations, the work to attain a just and lasting peace continues. In 2014, after 40 years of conflict, the Phillipines signed a peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The implementation of that agreement is now the focus of our work in order to ensure that the peace we have is durable. At the same time, peace talks have resumed with the Communist Party of the Phillipines, and peace negotiators are preparing for the third round of talks later in January. The Phillipines' decades-long quest for peace, especially in Mindanao, has taught us many valuable lessons on conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Today the Government of the Phillipines is embarking upon a new template for peace, with the support and assistance of our international partners. It is one where the dividends of peace are being planted while a peace agreement is still being negotiated. There is greater incentive to pursue and maintain peace when parties to a conflict see the need to safeguard the seeds of economic and social opportunities that are growing in their communities. It is a template that is anchored in greater inclusivity and ownership by all stakeholders — not only among warring factions, but also among all those affected by the conflict, who have an equal stake and interest in its resolution. Allow me to share some important elements of this new peace template.

First, our peace negotiators no longer need to wait for formal peace agreements to be signed before embarking upon projects for stakeholders so that they can experience and enjoy the dividends of peace. Development projects can be implemented alongside peace negotiations. The envisioned Mindanao trust fund, which the United Nations Development Programme has been invited to support, is anchored in that belief.

Secondly, aside from formal peace tables, we have instituted the Peoples' Peace Tables, which are open to all stakeholders who are directly involved in conflict, as well as those who are on the sidelines but are affected just the same — women, indigenous peoples, youth, local Government, civil society, traditional and folk leaders, religious leaders, as well as representatives of business and other sectors. The Peoples' Peace Tables allow for broader participation by people, the building of relationships, the strengthening of institutions, and healing and reconciliation.

Thirdly, economic empowerment remains key to conflict prevention. Fragile communities must benefit from socioeconomic development programmes, which can reduce their vulnerabilities and increase their capacity to address conflict.

The national experience of the Phillipines in building and sustaining peace is anchored in three complementary strategic pillars, some of which have been pointed out by previous speakers. The first pillar has to do with policy reform and governance, which addresses issues of injustice relative to land security, natural resources, identity and human rights. The second pillar has to do with capacity-building that strengthens Government institutions and empowers communities. The third pillar has to do with peace-promoting socioeconomic interventions.

In conclusion, those pillars can easily be applied to the work of the United Nations in addressing peace and security challenges. Our peacebuilding and peacekeeping initiatives should promote economic development at all stages of the peace process, uphold inclusivity through dialogue, and strengthen policies and governance, all while working with local Governments and institutions in the spirit of cooperation. Peace can be achieved and sustained if it is founded on the aspirations and labour of the people who seek it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mali.

Mr. Konfourou (Mali) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Mali congratulates Sweden on the organization of this debate on a topic of great relevance, namely, conflict prevention and sustainable peace. I also congratulate the Secretary-General for his outstanding presentation of his vision this morning on this issue.

I would like to make some comments in my national capacity.

For too long, conflict prevention has remained unattractive to the international community, including our Organization, which does not find it urgent. Alarm bells are heard only when conflicts erupt and become more complex. The various theatres of conflict in the world, including my own country, are edifying examples of that.

We need to reinvigorate preventive diplomacy. That requires greater cooperation among regional, national and international mechanisms for prevention and peacebuilding. It also requires good neighbourliness, peaceful coexistence, the non-use of force, mutual understanding and respect, enhanced international cooperation, and a culture of peace and dialogue among religions, regions and civilizations.

Poverty is one of the main causes of conflict in the world. The most vulnerable groups in our societies, particularly women, youth, children and the elderly, are the primary victims. Extreme poverty, climate change and despair expose young people in our countries to terrorism, violent extremism and migration, which has been a source of the humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean. And yet solutions exist.

At the national level, our States must improve governance and create conditions and equal opportunities for all citizens. At the international level, we need to implement the decisions and recommendations of the major international conferences on financing for development, so as to reduce the effects of poverty.

Conflict prevention is needed above all, and we must refrain from creating crises and limit military interventions, which often go against the advice of the countries of the region, especially when "after-sales service" is not provided. Indeed, it has been established by now that the military action in Libya in 2011 has had collateral effects on Mali and all the countries of the Sahel. Preventing conflict also means working to strengthen the capacity of the specific mechanisms set up by regional organizations, particularly the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, which make use of early warning tools.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight the need for an inclusive and global approach that takes into account women and youth in the analysis and implementation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies. Nobody should be left out if we want lasting peace in the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Mr. Panayotov (Bulgaria): Bulgaria thanks Sweden for convening this debate on a subject that is very relevant and timely. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing outlining his vision on how to take the work of the United Nations on prevention forward.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its member States.

The concept paper presented by the Swedish presidency (S/2017/6, annex) for today's debate offers us a valuable opportunity to consider many aspects of prevention, including the role that it can play in ending human suffering and reducing humanitarian needs.

The message for bringing prevention back to the fore emerged from the United Nations reviews on peace and security, which offered a wealth of recommendations for the way forward, including by addressing the root causes of armed conflicts at a much earlier stage. In that regard, Bulgaria welcomes the important new concept of sustaining peace, which encompasses activities aimed at addressing the root causes, preventing the outbreak and recurrence of armed conflicts and moving towards recovery and development in conflict-affected countries.

Focusing greater energy on prevention also means that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be part of our strategies for sustaining peace. With that understanding, Bulgaria contributed to the development and subsequent operationalization of the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation, which calls for a comprehensive and integrated approach that flows through all three pillars of the United Nations: peace and security, development and human rights.

The human costs of armed conflicts can be seen in all too many places. My country therefore feels obliged to take upon itself a greater commitment to implementing the new concept of sustaining peace as a cost-effective way to find sustainable political solutions to armed conflicts, which currently drive 80 per cent of the global humanitarian needs. In that regard, at the World Humanitarian Summit, Bulgaria made a set of commitments that particularly relates to prevention by addressing the root causes of armed conflicts, reducing fragility in post-conflict situations and bringing humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts together.

Furthermore, Bulgaria has consistently supported the mediation capacities of the United Nations system, including through an annual voluntary financial contribution to the United Nations Mediation Trust

Fund. Bearing in mind the increasing relevance of the prevention of conflicts and sustaining peace, let me assure the Council of my country's readiness to continue backing the activities of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Djibouti

Mr. Aden Moussa (Djibouti): At the outset, Djibouti aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Djibouti wishes to extend a warm welcome to Ms. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and to express its gratitude to the Head of Delegation for taking the lead in organizing this important debate of the Security Council on the theme "Conflict prevention and sustaining peace" under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security".

We have keenly followed the preparatory process for today's important open debate through the Swedish-style digital diplomacy, which the delegation has used as a tool for creating a conducive environment for what we hope will be a focused, rich and action-oriented discussion. We are also grateful for the quality of the insights provided by previous speakers.

(*spoke in French*)

Albert Camus, the French thinker, described the twentieth century as the century of fear, referring to the terrible wars of the previous century, which led to the birth of the United Nations. In Camus, there was also the hope that the next century would be a century of peace and harmony among peoples and of development. Although much has been done to silence the weapons, we have continued to experience a great number of conflicts and the emergence of new threats in the current century. The African continent in particular continues to face complex challenges, which are manifold. Among the most worrying are the threats of terrorism, intra-State conflicts, unconstitutional changes of Government, transnational organized crime and maritime piracy. While we can easily diagnose the problems, can we say that the solutions adopted have been clearly identified and have produced the expected results? The answer must be qualified.

We welcome the African Union's efforts aimed at developing promising instruments in partnership with the United Nations. We particularly welcome the effort to develop a continental framework for the structural prevention of conflicts as a tool to facilitate a coordinated approach to structural prevention at the level of the African Union Commission. We also welcome the instruments on the structural assessment of countries, whose objective is to facilitate the early identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict and the formulation of strategies for reducing structural vulnerability. Thanks to those instruments, we are confident of the continent's ability, in partnership with the United Nations, to significantly improve its security situation.

While the devastating impact of conflicts on human lives and the untold suffering that they engender is well known, the long-term cost to regional infrastructure and the economy is much less well known, as shown in the recent report of the Institute for Economics and Peace. That report, which is entirely devoted to the economic impact of violence and conflict on the global economy, provides an astounding estimate of the cost of conflict and violence. For 2015 alone, the figure is $13.6 trillion, or 13.3 per cent of the global gross domestic product. In order to put that in perspective, one can compare that figure with the 0.7 per cent commitment of funds for development assistance, which is one twentieth of that amount. That observation alone dictates the need for us to mobilize our efforts so as to better use the tools of preventive diplomacy at our disposal and set out in Articles 33, 34, 35 and 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the recommendations of the 2015 report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446). The message of the new Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, echoes those recommendations and should give a decisive impetus to our collective action.

Djibouti is convinced that we must invest in peace. That is why we joined the Group of Friends of Sustaining Peace. The policies implemented by His Excellency Mr. Ismaël Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti and Head of Government, are entirely guided by the need to promote peace. Prevention is an ongoing undertaking that requires constant vigilance. We understand in Djibouti the importance of prevention and of an appropriate response in the face of the violent extremism, which threatens to undermine our societies. That is the goal of the Horn and Eastern African Counter Violent Extremism Centre of Excellence and Counter-Messaging Hub, which has its headquarters in Djibouti.

In conclusion, if the past century was one of fear, we must do all we can to ensure that this century does not lead to the proliferation of a civilization of fear and terror, which is the goal of terrorists. In the absence of continued peace, we should mobilize our efforts and invest in lasting peace throughout the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Sumah (Sierra Leone): I heartily congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January 2017. Let me use this momentous occasion to wish you, Sir, a very happy new year. My delegation is thankful to you for convening this open debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable briefing.

Let me express the heartfelt apologies of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone, who, owing to unavoidable circumstances, could not be with us here today.

My delegation subscribes to the view stated in the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) that the Secretary-General is taking office at a time when our Organization faces myriad complicated challenges to peace and security, which makes it critical to deliver on the commitment of the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In that regard, the United Nations should pool its strength so as to strengthen the analysis brought to the Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. Adequate and predictable financing is also a prerequisite for good governance, mediation, country teams and the Peacebuilding Fund. As the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, aptly stated,

> "[t]he human costs of our failures can be seen in all too many places ... we have the tools with which to do better. Let us use them." (*S/2015/PV.7561, p. 3-4*)

To that end, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sierra Leone, let me express our profound appreciation for the continued support and interest of the Peacebuilding Commission, the wider membership of the United Nations and our international partners in strengthening peace and security in Sierra Leone. Today we have initiated a profound move in the United Nations core mandate from peacebuilding to peace consolidation and development. That manifests the Organization's strong commitment to our political and economic ambitions. On that note, I would like to use this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the members of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission through the Chair, Ambassador Marc-André Blanchard of Canada, for the tireless commitment and profound support that the configuration continues to display for our efforts to sustain peace, security and stability.

In our commitment to conflict-prevention and sustaining peace, we have made progress in addressing key priority areas that could trigger conflict, particularly in the areas of youth unemployment and empowerment, improving the justice system and the security sector, and the effective management of our natural resources. Mechanisms have been put in place for strong private-sector-led growth, which could translate into more concrete peace dividends. Sierra Leone has over the years been commended for its work towards the consolidation of peace and security. The holding of three successive violence-free, fair, transparent and credible elections signals our readiness to evolve towards a more developed phase of conflict prevention and peace consolidation. There is no gainsaying that our democratic process is progressively taking strong root.

Sierra Leone, a country that once received peacekeepers, now contributes peacekeepers to other countries. Our country, which was once a byword for humanitarian crisis, was one of the fastest economies before the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. A country that was rocked by armed and civil divisions has healed itself. We are grateful to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and we very much appreciate the commitment of our international friends. I am pleased to inform the Council that remarkable progress is being made in setting up the required structures to address the risk areas of youth unemployment and empowerment, good governance, the rule of law, drug trafficking and organized crime. However, sustained international support is still crucial if we are to fully address the challenges that we continue to face at both the national and the regional levels. The progress that we have collectively made in improving peace, security and stability provides us with a platform for rolling out the agenda for prosperity, which is our national development programme. It aims to build a sustainable future for all Sierra Leoneans and primarily focuses on moving the country beyond the phase of peace consolidation to one in which it is a more secure, peaceful and responsible member of the community of nations.

The Government of Sierra Leone is committed to promoting national reconciliation, political dialogue and an inclusive governance system, as well as gender equality. The constitutional review process is in its final stages and addresses major political and social issues. We have taken a collective decision to move towards becoming a middle-income nation by 2030. Almost 15 years ago, the conflict in Sierra Leone was officially declared over. Since the end of the war, with the support of the United Nations, the country has made tremendous progress in charting the path for conflict prevention and the sustainability of peace. We have considerably improved our national risk profile as a post-conflict country and enjoy increased confidence as a destination for quality investment. In March 2014, we witnessed a significant transition in our actions towards a democratic, peaceful, stable, developed and prosperous country. With the closure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone has left fragility behind.

In preventing conflict and sustaining peace, it is important to underscore the critical need for the existence of impartial and transparent institutions, which must be consolidated and strengthened with strong national ownership and inclusiveness. That will prevent relapse into conflict and further ensure peace consolidation. As rightly stated in the report (see S/2015/490) of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the Peacebuilding Architecture, coordination between the Security Council and peacebuilding agencies such as the Peacebuilding Commission is vital. There is a need for a mutual working relationship with a much more focused approach that seeks to utilize comparative strengths. Equally significant is building partnerships with regional and subregional organizations to address transnational crime.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Sierra Leone's commitment to promoting durable peace and security within its borders, as well as addressing subregional peace and security issues. We will continue to build on the remarkable progress achieved in terms of the political stability that is critical to our development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Mayong Onon (Malaysia): My delegation joins others in commending Sweden for convening this important debate in such a timely fashion. It offers an important and early opportunity for Member States to engage with Secretary-General Guterres in his areas of priority, namely, conflict prevention and sustaining peace. In that regard, we thank the Secretary-General for outlining his vision, to which we listened very carefully.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Thailand, Venezuela and Finland on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of Friends of Mediation, respectively.

Malaysia reaffirms its support for the principle that conflict prevention should lie at the heart of the Security Council's work and activities. Effectively addressing the myriad challenges to international peace and security today requires significant shifts in the way in which the Council and the United Nations as a whole work. We also welcome the increased emphasis on partnerships across and beyond the United Nations system that seek to ensure that possible responses are more comprehensive, credible and sustainable.

Moving forward, the Security Council must work more holistically with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, and break through the silos that hamper the Organization's work. Predictable funding is also important for sustaining peace. We would encourage non-traditional donors and other partners to consider making voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund with the goal of ensuring predictable and sustainable funding for future peacebuilding efforts. In the light of the renewed focus on the primacy of politics, the Security Council should take more proactive steps aimed at acting preventively, including by empowering its President to conduct low-key, quiet-diplomacy dialogues with representatives of the countries on its agenda.

Throughout Malaysia's recently concluded term on the Council, we saw that approach deployed, and we believe that its more frequent use would benefit the Council. At the very least, it would provide an avenue for direct engagement with the countries concerned. Timely action and proactive measures are essential, if the Council is to effectively pursue the conflict prevention agenda. At the same time, we should not lose sight of the broader strategic objectives of addressing the root causes of conflict, which may include poverty, inequality, human rights violations and even environmental destruction.

Malaysia believes that the Security Council remains uniquely and centrally placed to take steps to implement the conflict-prevention agenda. As elaborated on by previous speakers, the Charter provides the necessary tools; what is required is the political will and leadership on the part of the Council to utilize and implement them, working, of course, in close coordination and cooperation with the Secretariat, Member States and other partners and stakeholders.

In concluding, Malaysia renews its commitment to work with and support the Secretary-General in the discharge of his role and mandate, and we also pledge to continue supporting the work of the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Namibia.

Mr. Gertze (Namibia): As this is my first address since presenting credentials to Mr. António Guterres yesterday, allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Council, while at the same time congratulating Sweden and you, Sir, on assuming the presidency and wishing you and the new non-permanent members of the Security Council all the best during this tenure. Let us make this year the year for peace, as the Secretary-General reminded us. In congratulating Mr. Guterres on his appointment as our new Secretary-General, may I take this opportunity to thank him for putting peace and conflict prevention as the priority coordinates on the compass for our work this year.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Council will recall that for many years Namibia was a discussion point of the Security Council. Following our independence in 1990, we are now proud to say that Namibia is a child of international solidarity midwifed by the United Nations. We have gone through long and intense negotiations between the warring parties, and those, as well as our decision now to implement a policy of national reconciliation, have been at the heart of our stability for the past 26 years. Our efforts at conflict prevention have revolved around our policy of national reconciliation and ensuring the rights of all Namibian citizens regardless of identity and despite our awareness of the deep divisions in society.

We have not forgotten the policies of deliberate oppression and disempowerment that resulted from colonialism and apartheid. However, we have chosen to celebrate our independence, embrace our freedom, and treasure peace and harmony to solidify a prosperous future for our children. If there is anything that we have learned through the Namibian experience, it is that unity and diversity are crucial to sustaining peace. To nurture this unity, open and honest dialogue in all societies is indispensable.

On 8 June 2014, Pope Francis said:

> "Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage [...] to say yes to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation".

Conflict prevention means committing to peace and making the deep changes needed to maintain peace, even when uncomfortable. Here at the United Nations, we must begin to make such deep and possibly uncomfortable changes for peace. Our structures at the regional, continental and global levels must be revisited and improved upon. Since the concept note (S/2017/6, annex) for this meeting observes that the tools for peace and for conflict prevention are available in the United Nations Charter, our core political solution must begin here, at the United Nations. We must ensure that the benefits of democratic practice become normalized in a restructured Security Council and a revitalized General Assembly.

The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action declared that the full participation of women in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution, and all other peace initiatives, is essential to the realization of lasting peace. My delegation is proud that Namibia sent the very first all-female police contingent to Darfur, and we aim to maintain that method of operation.

Namibia fully associates itself with the African Union and its African Peace and Security Architecture and the related road map focused on conflict prevention, conflict management and peacebuilding, which are all fundamental to silencing the guns by 2020. However, it also requires commitment to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, including the threat posed by climate change to development.

Nuclear disarmament is central to conflict prevention. But to ensure its practicality, we must begin promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, linking safety to the use of nuclear energy and sharing technology. Our future generations depend upon it.

Finally, allow me to remind the Security Council that Namibia continues to call for the recognition and implementation of the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. In the same vein, I remind this House that the case of Western Sahara remains outstanding; that this is an issue which must be part of our discussions on conflict prevention; and that we must ensure that United Nations resolutions on that occupied territory are implemented forthwith.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of our Head of State and Government, His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to express my delegation's most sincere congratulations on Sweden's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, a task that it is carrying in a manner that reflects its skill and great leadership qualities.

With a view to formulating more concise observations on the issue before us, I will focus on Africa, where, in the context of conflict prevention and sustainable peace, we would make a critical note that the United Nations must recognize the need for and implement a Security Council reform that acknowledges, inter alia, the claim made by the African Union in keeping with the Ezulwini consensus and the Sirte Declaration.

Peace and security are necessary conditions for development, growth and stability. In pursuit of its national interests, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea strives for peace and freedom and remains firmly committed to supporting the Security Council in its primary role of the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since becoming a Member of the United Nations on 12 November 1968, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has not had the opportunity to serve as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. We are striving now to achieve that goal under the principle of equitable geographical rotation, which underpins the legitimacy of United Nations decision-making. However, my country, as a Member State, promotes the principles of the Security Council of peace and unity through diplomatic cooperation and the use of peaceful dialogue so as to mitigate the causes and consequences of conflicts and threats to world peace.

The security challenges facing humankind today are not exclusive to a given State, region or continent. The rise in inter-State conflict and violence has become a global phenomenon as conflicts have become more complex and multidimensional.

To ensure that the mandate of the Security Council is carried out in a cooperative manner, as my country's Permanent Representative I have held more than 100 bilateral meetings with my fellow ambassadors and concerned stakeholders to inform them about Equatorial Guinea, in particular its role in the Central African subregion and Africa at large.

In pursuit of international cooperation, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has also worked with intergovernmental organizations, such as the African Union and its organs, civil-society organizations, the Equatorial Guinean Child Aid Committee and others, in order to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). My Government is now working tirelessly to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and many other initiatives that promote peaceful pluralism.

Equatorial Guinea's Horizon 2020 initiative, a national socioeconomic development framework, demonstrates our commitment to implementing conflict prevention and sustainable peace through economic empowerment. Our commitment to the initiative has yielded commendable results — we achieved five of the eight MDGs.

The commitment of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to sustainable peace and security is evident in its policy of multilateralism and collective responsibility, and is bolstered by our participation in, and support from, intergovernmental organizations and working groups.

Through those programmes, we continue to build consensus and avenues for partnership through meetings, conferences and events on social, economic, political, health and environmental issues. We have hosted African Union Summits, the Africa Cup of Nations, the International Conference on Africa's Fight against Ebola, the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea

International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Food Security Programme meeting, the Southern Africa Summit, the Africa-South America Summit, the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit, the Africa-Arab World Summit and many other events.

According to the 2016 *Global Peace Index* report, the state of peace in the world is abysmal and is at risk. The report concluded that the world has become somewhat less peaceful, as compared to previous years. Violence is the consequence of human conditions, and its psychosocial effects are pervasive. Daily, we read the headlines and witness the effects of complex and multidimensional conflicts — images of violence, destruction and humanitarian crises that arise from the precarious state of security. Men, women and children are at risk as the result of decisions taken by internal and external political actors and institutions.

Conflict resolution requires integrated approaches to addressing the root causes and drivers of inter-State violence. In Africa, statistics tell us that through partnerships with subregional, regional and intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations and its organs, African States can create responsible public institutions capable of achieving inclusive development and sustainable peace.

Research shows that two thirds of the Security Council's activities in recent years have been focused on violence and conflict in Africa. However, Africa is not fully represented in the governing bodies of the United Nations and its organs, in particular the Security Council. There are currently nine United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. It is therefore inconceivable and unjustifiable that Africa, which has 54 Member States in the United Nations and whose problems account for more than 70 per cent of the issues handled annually by the Security Council, does not yet have a single permanent seat on the Council.

The failure to include African States when dealing with issues relating to their affairs and security creates sociopolitical and humanitarian conditions that keep African States and institutions dependent on insufficient and unstable foreign aid. Member States must resist the temptation to mould other parts of the world in their own image.

Moreover, the Security Council must recognize that longevity in leadership depends on the model of democratization. It can contribute to the maintenance of peace and does not necessarily mean a non-democratic Government. In the case of Equatorial Guinea, the longevity of our leader has been a key factor for our unity, morale and strength, and for the development of key infrastructure and sustainable peace. Multilaterally, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, under the leadership of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, continues to play a vital role in resolving conflicts in the region with a view to ensuring peace and stability in Africa. Accordingly, in the *Global Peace Index* report, Equatorial Guinea is among the 10 most peaceful countries of Africa. In addition, our literacy rate is one of the highest in Africa, at 93 per cent and, as a result of sound investments, my country can boast one of the highest gross domestic products per capita in Africa.

In conclusion, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea strives to promote comprehensive structures for the maintenance of international peace and security through diplomacy and compromise. The virtuous qualities and values of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea rest on the pillars of hard work, dynamism and innovation. In our view, the effectiveness of the United Nations needs to be enhanced. In that regard, we recommend that the Security Council improve the monitoring and coordination of responses among Member States in order to minimize the impact of conflicts and continue to promote peace and the maintenance of peace and security worldwide.

I once again congratulate the new members of the Security Council and hope that their efforts will bring the world lasting peace in 2017.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Samvelian (Armenia): We join others in congratulating you, Sir, on the start of your two-year term as a member of the Security Council. We also welcome your presidency and applaud your choice of theme for today's open debate. This is indeed an excellent opportunity to exchange views with the new Secretary-General about the fundamental issue of conflict prevention. We thank the Secretary-General for his extensive analysis and his proposed surge in diplomacy for peace. This subject matter is particularly topical as we confront grave challenges to peace and security at the global level.

First of all, as a consistent supporter and promoter of the concept and practice of conflict prevention, Armenia particularly welcomes the focus on taking early action to prevent conflict. We must note, however, that the issue poses a persistent challenge, as the operational activities of the United Nations and its relevant bodies often address conflicts as they occur — and collective preventive action has not seen much success.

In addressing the question of prevention, Armenia has consistently stressed the importance of synergy, coherence and coordination among United Nations bodies in order to sustainably achieve the mutually reinforcing, interrelated and indivisible primary objectives of the Organization — known as the three pillars of peace and security, development and human rights. In underlining the objective of achieving tangible results, we have consistently emphasized early prevention, as inaction gives rise to conflicts, major humanitarian crises and, not least, atrocity crimes.

We believe that, over the years, the United Nations and its States Members have reached the reasonable conclusion that conflicts are detectable at a considerably earlier phase because they are, more often than not, a reaction to persistent injustice, discrimination and the denial of rights — which are generally the root causes of conflict. We speak from experience. The human rights aspect of conflict prevention should therefore receive particular attention across the entire United Nations system. In other words, all human rights are a function of security.

Secondly, the regional context of conflict prevention requires broader recognition and support. A division of labour and coordination and non-duplication of efforts and activities are the building blocks for enhancing the capacity of regional organizations to prevent and resolve conflicts. We serve as a example of success in applying such efforts in our region. Armenia welcomes the support of the international community, the United Nations and the Secretary-General for the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairmanship, which is seeking the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

In that connection, Armenia once again draws the attention of the international community to Azerbaijan's ongoing obstruction of tangible progress towards reaching a peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in conformity with the internationally agreed format. Most recently, on 29 December, Azerbaijan carried out a diversionary incursion attempt into Armenia, which resulted in human losses. That heinous act took place only months after its large-scale attack on Nagorno Karabakh in the beginning of April 2016. Through such acts, Azerbaijan continues to inflict considerable damage on the peace process.

Furthermore, the habitual glorification of the atrocities, beheadings and mutilations committed by the armed forces of Azerbaijan, as witnessed most recently during the April 2016 aggression, represent a grim demonstration of the incapacity of the authorities of Azerbaijan to adhere to the basic norms of the civilized world. The perpetrators of such heinous crimes should be brought to justice. The irresponsibility and belligerence of the authorities of Azerbaijan should receive forceful condemnation by the international community.

In a statement on 29 December 2016, the Foreign Ministry of Armenia stressed that, at a time when the most serious damage caused to the settlement process as a result of the Azerbaijan's aggression against Nagorno Karabakh in April 2016 had not yet been overcome, Baku embarked upon a new bit of adventurism, grossly violating the agreements reached at the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits and the commitment to settle the issue through peaceful means. Azerbaijan has been acting in blatant defiance of the most recent statement of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chair countries, issued in Hamburg on 8 December 2016, in which they strongly urged a strict adherence to the 1994/1995 ceasefire agreements.

In their related statement of 9 December 2016, the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs once again urged strict observance of the agreements reached during summits in Vienna and St. Petersburg, including the obligations to finalize in the shortest possible time an OSCE investigative mechanism. To date, Azerbaijan has continued to reject the implementation of the agreements on the expansion of the OSCE monitoring team in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict area and the establishment of an OSCE investigative mechanism on the ceasefire violations. The most recent military actions of Azerbaijan, on 29 December 2016, can only stand as proof of its intention to deny the verification of ceasefire violations, evade the responsibility that it bears for those violations and sustain the escalation of tensions.

Armenia remains fully committed to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict within the internationally agreed format of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship and urges, as an immediate priority, the full implementation of the agreements reached at the Vienna and St. Petersburg summits in May and June 2016, respectively.

In conclusion, the prevention of conflict or of relapse into conflict also entails a change of mindset. We strongly urge Azerbaijan to grasp the basic fact that there is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and that there can be no military solution to the conflict nor justification for the human losses associated with it.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan): Afghanistan wishes to thank Her Excellency Foreign Minister Margot Wallström of the Kingdom of Sweden and her delegation for convening today's important debate, and we hope that this meeting will mark the start of a new phase in United Nations efforts to embed conflict prevention at the core of the Organization's peace and security architecture. We are also particularly grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres for his visionary and inspiring briefing earlier today.

Toda we witnessed yet another bloody day in my country. The Taliban committed multiple terrorist attacks in the Kabul, Kandahar and Helmand provinces of Afghanistan. Based on the most recent reports, approximately 135 people, mostly civilians, including women and children, were killed or wounded in the carnage. Among the wounded are our Governor of Kandahar province, the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Afghanistan and a number of other diplomatic colleagues. We pray for those who lost their lives and wish those who were injured a speedy recovery. Let me thank Ms. Wallström for extending her message of support this morning to the victims and to the Government and the people of Afghanistan.

Today's attacks in my country and the views expressed in this debate illustrate in clear terms that sustaining peace is a complex undertaking that requires consistency across multiple lines of effort. It also highlights that the United Nations is simultaneously preoccupied with an unprecedented number of security and humanitarian crises and that more focus is needed to overcome current conflicts and prevent those of tomorrow. A glimpse at the current international landscape reveals that violent extremism and terrorism feature dominantly in several conflict settings around the world. We believe that terrorism can be defeated only through a multidimensional approach that focuses on both its internal and its external drivers.

The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism constitutes a key preventive tool for addressing some of the internal drivers of violent extremism at the societal level, above and beyond security and military measures. However, the United Nations must also pay greater attention to some of the external drivers of such phenomena. The cycle of violence and insecurity in Afghanistan and our part of the world is inextricably linked to the presence of sanctuaries and safe havens in the region, from which and in which extremist groups are sustained and enjoy an incessant flow of political, financial, material and logistical support for the continuation of their malicious activities.

In that light, the United Nations, and the Council in particular, should devise a viable approach to identify situations where elements in some State institutions facilitate violence and extremist activities by non-State proxies as a means to advance their foreign policy agenda.

The sustaining peace agenda goes hand in hand with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and provides a key tool by helping to prevent conditions that may give rise to conflict and instability, such as poverty, lack of development and dire humanitarian conditions. Consistent with SDG Goal 16, the continued partnership of the international community with fragile States remains crucial for helping States to implement their national development goals.

National dialogue, mediation and reconciliation aimed at fostering understanding aimed at preventing conflicts, as well as resolving them through peaceful means, are other important components of the conflict prevention and sustaining peace agenda. In our case, the Government of National Unity is making every effort to ensure lasting peace for our peoples. In that effort, we are reaching out to reconcilable elements within Afghan armed groups who are willing to give up violence and embrace a new future as peaceful and law-abiding citizens.

We are pleased that our peace efforts enjoy broad support from regional and international partners, which is imperative for the success of our endeavours. Neverthless, it is imperative, whether in our case or any other peace process, that the principles of national leadership and ownership be fully upheld, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. In that context, we have expressed strong reservations with regard to open declarations by some in our region about their contacts with armed opposition groups active in Afghanistan, conducted without the consent of the Afghan Government. Let me reassert that any kind of talks on the situation in my country has neither any value nor legitimacy without the participation and approval of our Government, which is the most democratically elected Administration in the history of our nation.

What are the additional steps required by the Security Council and within the United Nations system to bolster existing efforts and how can current preventive tools be better utilized to prevent conflict and sustain peace? The United Nations is well positioned to help address the trust deficit associated with harmful State rivalries, which often lead to conflict and wherein some actors go to all lengths, including the use of violent proxy forces, in the pursuit of political, security and economic objectives. That phenomenon is predominant in our region. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, can play an important role in addressing the root causes and structural drivers of conflict, and in furthering efforts to foster mutual trust and confidence for common gain at the national, regional and international levels.

Unity and consensus in the Council, along with efforts to ensure justice, are imperative for conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Far too often, a lack of consensus in the Council has blocked the effective action needed to avoid the exacerbation of a particular conflict and to create fertile ground for healthy dialogue on the peace and negotiations front. Moreover, strengthening the United Nations early-warning system requires greater coordination among the relevant United Nations offices to monitor fluid and conflict-prone settings in order to identify viable approaches to averting potential crises.

In conclusion, we hope that the year 2017 will mark the start of a new era of beneficial efforts by the United Nations to place prevention and the sustainability of peace at the forefront of its efforts to ensure a more peaceful and prosperous international landscape for humankind as a whole. We fully support the vision of the Secretary-General, presented today, on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and we look forward to working with him on its implementation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus): Before today's meeting I had my qualms about taking part in this discussion. What is the chance of being heard if one is number 86 on the speakers list? The consideration that tipped the scales of my reasoning was the Swedish ownership of today's event. I personally owe it to the courage and humanity of legendary Swedish diplomats — the names of Raoul Wallenberg and Dag Hammarskjöld come to mind first — that I could expect today's meeting to be more straightforward and less conventional than what the Security Council setting might usually invite.

Call me alarmist or easily impressionable, but I choose to believe that the creeping erosion over the past couple of decades in the rules- and principles-based environment of international engagement has steadily increased the risk of an all-out global nuclear annihilation conflict between the world's major Powers, be it by intent, mistake or tragic coincidence. Barring a meaningful accord between the world's major nuclear Powers on their common primary responsibility for preventing the final global war and for establishing the collective framework for peace, all our attempts to find lasting solutions to smaller-scale conflicts will most likely prove to be futile.

The United Nations has been doing a lot of good in the peace and security area, trying to micromanage a system that is deregulated at the macro level. But it can do better. We have to admit that reckless stress-testing of the degree of endurance in the world's sustainability has to stop. The world has to wake up to a sobering realization of the true degree of the fragility of our environment — physical, social, cultural and political. That realization will not come about through a majority vote in the General Assembly or the Security Council. No amount of strength or collective goodwill can, by itself, compensate for the lack of leadership on the part of leaders. Leaders have to lead.

A watershed in modern history may happen once the world's militarily most powerful nations publicly agree, with regard to global security, that, for them, there is no fork in the road, that there is no alternative to world peace — world peace based on a collective legal framework jointly guarded by those Powers in good faith and to the best of their abilities.

The world is anxiously waiting to see if the recently reborn hope for better understanding between the world's super-Powers can materialize. Does the premise of the special responsibility of the leaders make other members of the Council redundant? Not at all: elected members of the Council do matter. But the true measure of the value of a country's contribution to the work of the Council is hardly the number of statements made, side events held or votes cast. The true measure of success of the work of the Council is the ability of individual members — acting in the absence of publicity, probably unreported to the world — to create within the Council a sense of greater moral urgency that can move the big Powers to connect and empathize.

All of us have perfected the art of imparting to our interlocutors what we know is right. Some of us excel in public shaming our opponents for their wrongdoings. Very few of us can display the courage to step back, give others the benefit of the doubt and tone down our rhetoric for the sake of reaching better understanding.

The world does not need the Security Council to be yet another political theatre. The world does not even use the Security Council much as a forum for public speaking. Yet the world badly needs the Security Council, defined not so much by the turning wheels of its political machinery as by the sincere interaction of human beings who make the most commendable effort of reaching out to a counterpart and can master the art of talking to and not at each other.

At the risk of inviting the wrath of the President for breaching the sacred time limit for statements, I would like to end with a most precious prompt for the use of the best instrument available to humans for ending and preventing wars and conflicts.

> "Forgiveness breaks the chain of causality because he who 'forgives' you — out of love — takes upon himself the consequences of what you have done. Forgiveness therefore always entails a sacrifice. The price you must pay for your own liberation through another's sacrifice is that you in turn must be willing to liberate in the same way, irrespective of the consequences to yourself."

Those words of wisdom belong to a great Swede, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cambodia.

Mr. Tuy (Cambodia): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in congratulating Sweden and you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and for organizing today's important debate.

Before delivering my national statement, I wish to align myself with the statements made on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to Secretary-General António Guterres for outlining his vision on global conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Cambodia fully supports the Secretary-General's vision for making 2017 a year for peace, and we assure Secretary-General Guterres of Cambodia's full cooperation in making that vision a reality.

The international community remains committed to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but the global security situation remains worrisome. The first 10 days of the new year have been marked by numerous terrorist attacks across the globe. Those attacks undermine the social and economic development that the Organization has worked so hard to achieve.

Long-standing conflicts perpetuate violence, thereby contributing to radical thought and action. Conflict prevention is the prerequisite for sustainable peace and development. In order to ensure sustained peace, the global community must address the deep-rooted causes of conflict, including the negative social, political and economic conditions that contribute to the cycle of violence. In that context, the United Nations and its organs, including the Security Council, have a vital role to play. The Charter of the United Nations outlines the Organization's responsibility to promote the pacific settlement of disputes, thereby bringing about sustained peace, security and prosperity for the world's populations.

Accordingly, the prevention of conflict must be at the core of the work of the United Nations, meaning that action to curtail disputes must be taken early and decisively. My delegation believes that, for that to be an effective strategy, greater political will must be exercised by all parties. Nevertheless, conflict prevention should not be viewed through a narrow lens, where it is limited to the maintenance of international peace and security through military means. On the contrary, the promotion of socioeconomic development and addressing climate change should be given the highest priority by every organ of the United Nations. Therefore, in order to provide the necessary political leadership so as to be able to fully capitalize on the opportunities for preventive action, comprehensive and purposeful international cooperation must be promoted. The Security Council must be open to working with the greater United Nations membership, while remaining politically accountable and transparent in its engagement. The views of the General Assembly, the most representative and democratic organ within the United Nations system, must be fully considered by the Security Council in its work, particularly as those views concern issues of development and its link to the conflict-prevention agenda.

The Royal Government of Cambodia believes that, by focusing on such a broad view of conflict prevention, greater political will, along with strong United Nations-based leadership, can pave the way for a safer and more prosperous world for all. My delegation reiterates the importance of establishing a more effective working relationship between the Security Council and the Secretary-General, while taking full account of the views expressed by the broader membership of the United Nations. The role of the Secretary-General is undeniably important in that context, and his reports and other documents with his recommendations should be based on clear, accurate and verifiable data, which will help our understanding of issues and inform our actions accordingly, thereby contributing to sustained peace and development globally. Enhancing the working relationship between the Council, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly will promote transparency in our work while keeping the Organization accountable to its global constituency.

In conflict prevention it is important to reject the use, or threat of use, of force in international relations; that principle is stated in the Charter of the United Nations. Member States must be fully respectful of the Charter, including the principles of sovereignty, the territorial integrity of States, self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

The Royal Government of Cambodia stands ready to actively engage with all its partners on the issue of conflict prevention with a view to promoting the global agenda for sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Kamau (Kenya): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of January. I commend you, Sir, for the manner in which you have conducted the affairs of the Council so far. I thank you for organizing this timely debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace and for providing us with a concept note (S/2017/6/annex) to frame it.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on how we can prevent conflicts so as to achieve sustainable peace, as guided by the Charter of the United Nations. We believe that the priorities that he set out in his briefing, particularly on conflict prevention and sustaining peace, will re-energize and refocus our collective commitment towards achieving the objectives of the Charter. We agree with the Secretary-General that the world urgently needs a "surge in diplomacy for peace". Kenya stands ready to play its role in that surge.

I also thank the previous speakers for their insightful statements.

We believe that, in order to succeed in our goal of sustaining peace, we need to reframe and reprioritize our responses. Sustaining peace must run through all our collective efforts, ranging from conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, reconstruction to development. And we agree with the Secretary-General that the primary responsibility for conflict prevention lies with Member States.

The renewed approach to sustaining peace that the Secretary-General laid out today presents a solid opportunity for the United Nations to adapt better to today's global realities. We need to reintegrate peace in our security, development and human rights agenda. We must place emphasis on conflict prevention and on addressing the root causes of conflict.

We know that the United Nations peace and security architecture has benefited from three reviews in 2015 on peace operations. Similarly, the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development provides us with a solid foundation for achieving and sustaining peace and prosperity without leaving anyone behind. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the basis for addressing the root causes of conflict, including poverty.

Our strong, collective political will can help us in achieving lasting peace only when we invest financial and other resources in prevention. That will ensure that we are able to build a greater common understanding of conflicts, share early-warning information and develop the proper analysis of potential hotspots to guide timely early interventions.

The United Nations has an important and unique character that reinforces its role in conflict prevention. It is the only truly universal entity that can guide and develop norms for guiding Member States as they seek to react to conflicts and prevent them. But for the United Nations to play its leadership role in conflict prevention effectively it needs to break down the silo mentality within its system, which undermines its ability to prevent conflicts. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations responses remain overly fragmented.

Allow me to highlight a few areas and steps that we believe the Council can take to ensure more effective conflict prevention among Member States and across the United Nations system.

First, sustainable peace requires the development of national institutions with the capacity to address the root causes of conflict. National ownership and inclusive leadership of such institutions are key to achieving success in efforts to prevent conflicts and sustain peace. In designing special political missions, including mediation, peacekeeping operations, peacebuilding programmes and other preventative actions, strong coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and national authorities, based on mutual complementarity, are vital for success. The inclusive participation of youth and women in national institutions is also vital to sustaining peace.

Secondly, the United Nations, including the Council, should continue encouraging and reinforcing mutually supportive partnerships on conflict prevention with regional and subregional entities. Modern conflict is increasingly intra-State in nature, with cross-border tendencies in particular regions, occasioned by unique political and socioeconomic grievances. Regional entities have better knowledge of their areas of operation, including the minute details on conflict dynamics, whereas the United Nations has unique expertise and tools sourced at the global level to resolve the problems we face.

Thirdly, the Security Council, as the custodian of international peace and security, needs to prioritize the financing of conflict prevention, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, so as to ensure that sustainable and predictable funding is available. Flexibility in resource mobilization and partnerships with international financial institutions and regional development banks are key.

Fourthly, conflict prevention is impossible without effective early-warning mechanisms. It is essential for the United Nations, including the Council, to assist Member States and regional and subregional entities to develop capacities for early-warning analysis, information-sharing and the development of common approaches to prevent the eruption of violent conflict. That is normally far cheaper and more efficient in addressing conflicts than the usual reactive tools employed once violence has erupted.

Fifthly, it is essential to strengthen the interlinkages relating to sustaining peace and conflict prevention among the various United Nations entities, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Unique intergovernmental bodies, such as the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, should be strengthened so that they can play their role in conflict prevention and sustaining peace more effectively, while enhancing coherence in United Nations efforts.

In conclusion, I want to state that progress in prioritizing conflict prevention and sustaining peace will depend upon sustaining people's trust in political institutions, enhancing inclusivity, justice and the rule of law within credible national institutions and diversifying economies through the implementation of the SDGs in order to address the root causes of conflict. The primacy of politics in preventing and resolving conflicts is key to sustaining peace. The Council must therefore continue to strive to keep all solutions to conflict political.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Haiti.

Mr. Régis (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, first of all, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Haiti, to congratulate Sweden once again for its election to the Security Council and for taking the initiative to organize this very important open debate, which is based on the need to take a new look at peacekeeping.

that privileged tool for crisis management and conflict prevention.

Today's meeting is taking place within a specific international context marked by the return of the dynamic of war as an option for settling conflicts, and by the threatening spectre of a new arms race, the sustained expansion of violent extremism and terrorism and the proliferation of crisis hotbeds where the Council's authority and its credibility are often put to the test owing to its inability to provide collective responses in accordance with its mandate. Those crises in various parts of the world do not end and provide a perfect example of the problem. Those crises underline, as if it were necessary, the appropriateness of making certain changes to the right of veto, whose scope should clearly be limited or reduced, particularly in situations where human rights are being brazenly violated and where crimes amounting to crimes against humanity and serious violations of humanitarian law are being committed.

On another front, over the past few decades peacekeeping operations have been undergoing genuine qualitative changes. Many of the intra-State conflicts that the United Nations is concerned with today occur against a backdrop of extreme poverty. In most cases, it is no longer simply a matter of Blue Helmets acting as an intervention force or monitoring a ceasefire between the belligerents. These are increasingly multidimensional operations involved in a whole range of interrelated actions aimed at facilitating political processes, establishing or restoring the rule of law and creating momentum for security, stability and peace.

For its part, my country, where the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) has been working to stabilize it for almost 13 years, considers the ongoing review of strategic priorities for peacekeeping particularly timely. My delegation fully endorses a number of the key concepts that various United Nations bodies have put forward in recent years in the context of conflict prevention and resolution. Those proposals, which have not lost their relevance in the light of current challenges, give the most weight to solutions that take into account the root causes of conflicts and their underlying structural factors. In that regard, I would like to make four points.

First, we consider it crucial to ensure that the Security Council takes the lessons of the recent past on board by fully reclaiming the mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to providing strong responses to the string of current threats to peace and security. Secondly, we cannot stress the virtues and advantages of conflict prevention enough. Thirdly, when considering the spectrum of the factors that often lead inexorably to war, whether civil, local or regional, we must not underestimate or obscure the underlying causes of conflict — economic poverty, social injustice, political oppression, marginalization and exclusion. Lastly, we should emphasize that, in every aspect of its conflict-prevention and peacekeeping activities, the United Nations should never shirk its responsibilities to the peoples it is called on to protect, including in cases of moral and material prejudice of which it is itself the cause and in the name of the respect for human rights standards that it is its essential mission to promote.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly sketch the most recent developments in Haiti, which I know the Council has been monitoring and is keenly interested in. On 3 January, Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council confirmed the election of Mr. Jovenel Moïse as our new Head of State, after a vote that will undoubtedly become a historic marker. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to pay tribute to the United Nations for its support, particularly through MINUSTAH, which made an enormous contribution to the result. Of course, we know that elections are not an end in themselves. But the success of the municipal, legislative and presidential contests will unquestionably make it possible for us to turn the page on the political instability that has so heavily mortgaged my country's chances of socioeconomic development.

At a time when we are embarking upon a new course, away from the path of internal struggles and conflicts that have done nothing but hold back our social and economic modernization, one need hardly stress how important strengthening international solidarity is for us. Haiti continues to rely on the support of every component of the United Nations to enable it to continue with its reconstruction process and make steady progress along the road to democracy and the rule of law, which is the only possible path to a stable, peaceful political system and towards growth and poverty reduction — in other words, sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Komada (Slovakia): I am delighted to be able to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council, and to wish Sweden every success in promoting global security and stability during its term as an elected member of the Council for 2017 and 2018. I would also like to join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing on how he intends to improve our peace and security architecture's functioning in the areas of conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

I would like to take this opportunity to condemn the terror attacks that took place in Afghanistan today and to express our condolences to the families of the victims and our wishes for a speedy recovery for the injured. We believe that the perpetrators of such acts must be held accountable for them.

While we align ourselves with the statement delivered early by the observer of the European Union, we also support the statement made by the Chair of the Group of Friends of Mediation. I would now like to make some observations in my national capacity.

In 2015, all the major peace and security reviews stressed the centrality of conflict prevention to the work of the United Nations. We believe we should consider taking eight steps to help to implement that prevention.

First, we should increase the sensitivity to conflict and strengthen the foundations for conflict prevention across the whole United Nations system, so that the Organization is in a better position to prepare and implement preventive action and mediation in order to address threats to international peace and security more efficiently.

We also need continuing engagement and greater coherence and coordination among the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, consistent with their mandates as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

With regard to early warning, we should put considerable emphasis on the importance of detecting emerging conflicts early, in order to prevent them from erupting in the first place. The Secretary-General should provide the Security Council with good analysis and correct, detailed information and advice.

Where mediation and gender equality are concerned, we should to draw on the best available expertise in the global community of mediators, both men and women. By now it is a well-established fact that women's involvement in mediation and conflict prevention is essential rather than optional.

Strengthening and streamlining the Secretariat's political, strategic, analytical and deployment capacities would benefit both the Security Council and the wider membership.

Regarding engagement with regional organizations, we should consider taking further steps to promote closer operational cooperation between the United Nations and its regional partners.

In the area of national capacities, the United Nations should do more to help countries build their own national capacities for conflict prevention.

Last but not least, we believe that we can arrive at more effective measures by examining the root causes of conflict. We encourage the Secretary-General to propose the measures needed to improve management and financing within the Secretariat, including suggesting and identifying funding for strengthening and streamlining prevention and mediation capacities. My delegation is ready to work with the Secretary-General on developing a comprehensive, modern and effective operational peace architecture that integrates prevention more systematically into the three pillars of the work of the United Nations. In that context, Slovakia stands ready to support and contribute to the preparation and holding in September 2017 of a high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In spite of the many successful efforts that the United Nations has made in the past to help entire nations and millions of people, in many situations we have either arrived late, or were unable to intervene, or have been prevented by subjective political interests from even discussing the possibility of how to prevent conflicts, despite having plenty of evidence of emerging threats.

It has been generally recognized that nationally owned institution-building efforts are at the core of peacebuilding. When the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2151 (2014), it reaffirmed that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments is critical to consolidating peace and stability; promoting poverty reduction, the rule of law and good governance; extending legitimate State authority; and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

Slovakia, as a long-term troop-contributing country that places strong emphasis on applying prevention measures to broader multilateral concepts, stands ready to contribute and offer its capacities and experience, in particular in the area of security sector reform, in collaboration with members of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, the relevant departments of the Secretariat and external partners.

A recent report of the International Peace Institute states that sustaining peace is "a goal and a process to build a common vision of society". While this process is hard to define and harder to break down into concrete, operational steps, we have a number of building blocks at our disposal, including, but not limited to, greater links between peace, development and human rights; inclusive national ownership, where local actors have a consistent voice and women and youth play a critical role; and more strategic and close partnerships with diverse stakeholders that are better utilized.

Last year, during the Secretary-General campaign, the words "prevention" and "sustainable development" were among those most quoted by all candidates, and rightly so. Prevention may make it possible to save considerable resources needed for sustainable development, and sustainable development may prevent conflict relapse, which is clearly a win-win situation.

Finally, another word often quoted was "implementation". Indeed, if we implement our agreements under the pillars of development and peacekeeping/peacebuilding, and support the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen those pillars within the Secretariat, we may be very well on our way to achieving a peaceful and sustainable planet.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Cyprus.

Mr. Mavros (Cyprus): At the outset, let me express our sincere gratitude to Sweden for convening this open debate, as well as to commend the new Secretary-General for outlining his promising vision.

Cyprus aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following in its national capacity.

With the new Secretary-General taking office, we welcome this opportunity to re-invigorate the focus on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. As a country facing a long-standing conflict, with first-hand experience on the numerous ways in which a conflict can be detrimental, we warmly welcome the vision of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to drive forward the sustaining peace agenda, with a particular focus on conflict prevention.

It is undeniable that the United Nations is dealing with an unprecedented number of ongoing conflicts, which seriously impedes the effort to allocate resources and funds in such a way as to achieve the desired shift towards conflict prevention. It has been well established that the costs associated with conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations can be much higher than conflict prevention. That clearly indicates how the conflicts currently under way also limit the capacity of the United Nations to prevent future conflicts.

One of the key determinants of building and sustaining peace is timely political leadership. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the Council and the new Secretary-General pave the way for much-needed consensus within the Security Council, especially on the political track and at times of humanitarian emergencies.

In order to achieve lasting peace, the Council must explore ways of improving its ability to prevent conflicts and facilitate the establishment of dialogue on a political level, in line with the principle of nationally owned and nationally driven political processes. It has been stated repeatedly in this organ and beyond that there can be no sustainable military solution to ongoing conflicts. We would add that there can be no sustainable peace without ensuring local inclusive ownership of the peace process and of the eventual peace agreement. We encourage shifting the focus to political-level dialogue. Moreover, we believe that the role of the Council and the Secretary-General in the framework prescribed by the Charter of the United Nations is vital to the accomplishment of lasting peace.

Action in conflict prevention and peacekeeping needs to be conducted in compliance with the principles of neutrality, objectivity and non-bias, in line with agreed mandates. Those principles should be applied as an integral part of the role of the United Nations to ensure the restoration of law and order and compliance with international law. Neutrality must not be interpreted as the median line between legality and illegality.

It is necessary to highlight the link between development and security as a key determinant in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. Widening gaps and increased inequalities are the yeast of new conflicts. In that regard, a shift towards a more all-encompassing and diverse approach to conflict prevention is imperative, including incorporating the basic elements of the sustaining peace agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and interlinking the recommendations and proposals for action put forward in the reports on peacekeeping reform (see S/2015/446), the peacebuilding architecture (see S/2015/490) and the women and peace and security agenda.

In conclusion, there is significant political and financial justification for a collective, United Nations system-wide recommitment to conflict prevention. This open debate provides a valuable opportunity for all Member States to express their individual commitment to the new vision of conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Therefore, Cyprus also calls upon Security Council members to reiterate their own commitment to demonstrate the political will and leadership necessary to ensure that conflict prevention and sustaining peace can be tangible goals for the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Marshall Islands.

Ms. Kabua (Marshall Islands): The Republic of the Marshall Islands aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Federated States of Micronesia on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

I wish to thank the delegation of Sweden for convening this debate and to congratulate it warmly on assuming the Security Council presidency for this month. I also wish to extend congratulations on behalf of my Government to the new members of the Security Council. I wish them every success during their tenure. Moreover, through you, Mr. President, I would also like to convey my personal gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström. It is wonderful to have met her in person and to have witnessed her exemplary leadership. Furthermore, I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General and to thank him for taking on such a tremendous challenge at this time.

As we begin this new calendar year, it is of paramount importance that the Security Council be better able to demonstrate credible and responsive leadership. If indeed the world is at a moment where a large question mark hangs over multilateralism, then confidence must be strengthened.

The Marshall Islands is a small nation but it is very much a full and equal Member of the United Nations — one whose deeper history is also marked by the imprint of global conflict and threat. Our firm view is that more proactive approaches are needed to address to conflict prevention, and stronger political will is necessary to drive it forward. That will further build global confidence and avoid or minimize security disasters before they occur.

We fully support the Council's increased attention and appropriate engagement on the role of women and young women in conflict prevention and resolution. The Marshall Islands affirms the Pacific Islands Forum's Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, adopted in 2012, and we call for renewed efforts to take it forward. I do not see the treatment of gender and security as something rooted in an ideological high ground or any particular political agenda. Rather, I urge the Council to look at it through a very practical lens, and consider the impacts upon, and the active role of, half of the world's population in addressing peace and security.

I would call the Council's attention to the July 2015 open debate on peace and security challenges facing small island developing States (SIDS), which was convened by the presidency of New Zealand (see S/PV.7499). The debate revealed new dimensions of security analysis across SIDS regions and it should not be an isolated event. It is imperative that the Council establish a regular agenda item or regularized treatment of this topic. Small islands States make up nearly 20 per cent of the membership of the United Nations. Our populations are small, our water is vast, and our location often sits between the edges of major and often conflicting global Powers. Yet based on the Council's agenda, one would think that we barely exist. However, basic math reveals that the Council is overlooking concerning emerging trends across our region. Long-term risks of instability are growing and are coupled with growing youth populations and overwhelming unemployment.

The treatment of our security cannot be considered apart from that of much larger geostrategic interaction. For many, including those in the Pacific, our baseline is State fragility and we are uniquely vulnerable to external shocks. Others might see our sovereignty and marine resources as just a string of pearls to be collected in a contest between the growing rivalries of major world Powers that is fought across the Pacific Ocean.

Our Pacific regional statement made a compelling case for increased attention to the relationship between climate change and security, where there are important linkages within and across all regions. As a low-lying nation, it is important that we understand such linkages in the wider security and political context. We recall the Council's 2011 presidential statement on climate and security (S/PRST/2011/15), which states that there are security implications on the loss of territory for low-lying nations and the risk of aggravating certain threats to international peace and security. Those are not words to be ignored. They must be understood in regions like ours where fragility is a worsening baseline.

I urge the Council in its future work not only to strengthen engagement on conflict prevention resolution, but also to assure that there is an agenda item and regularized treatment of small island States. It is unlikely that we will be at the immediate front of conflicts, but the longer-term trend points in very dangerous directions. If the Council is serious about conflict prevention, then it should take to heart our voice and that of other small island nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Sparser (Liechtenstein): Liechtenstein thanks the Swedish presidency, and in particular Foreign Minister Wallström, for this Security Council open debate on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. After a year of overwhelming conflict-induced human suffering, a discussion on how to strengthen preventive action in the United Nations is indeed timely and pertinent, not least in the light of the Security Council's difficulties in finding appropriate responses to many of the predominant crises of our time. We also warmly welcome the Secretary-General at his first official appearance in the Council and thank him for outlining his vision for a renewed emphasis on prevention, as well as his commitment to stronger diplomacy for peace. A close and well-functioning working relationship between the Secretary-General and the Security Council will be a crucial element in that regard.

Liechtenstein welcomes the shift initiated by General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) towards a more comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that spans the entire conflict cycle — from early warning and action to reconciliation, reconstruction and development — and flows through all three pillars of the United Nations, including development and human rights. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects such a comprehensive approach, in particular in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. If thoroughly implemented, the SDGs can be a powerful prevention tool, and the same holds for the United Nations body of human rights obligations. At the same time, substantial gaps in the implementation of sustainable development commitments and consistent violations of human rights obligations are important early warning signs that can constitute the basis of a decision by the United Nations to take early and preventive action.

The Security Council and the General Assembly have both committed to a comprehensive approach to transitional justice when reviewing the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. Transitional justice is an important prerequisite for consolidating peace and preventing conflicts, and it decreases the likelihood that post-conflict societies relapse into conflict. Research on transitional justice has turned attention to the possibility of using transitional justice while a conflict is ongoing in an attempt to resolve disputes and grievances sooner, thereby bringing the conflict to an end more quickly. That is one of many reasons that Liechtenstein initiated General Assembly resolution 71/248. It was in order to establish an international, impartial and independent mechanism that will collect and preserve evidence of the most serious crimes committed in Syria since March 2011. In addition to contributing to justice, the mechanism will also have a deterrent effect.

Deterrence is a key preventive tool and one of the main achievements of the International Criminal Court (ICC) when it comes to preventing mass atrocities. As the international judicial institution promoting accountability and an end to impunity, the ICC directly contributes to preventing the commission of future atrocity crimes. It is also an important global institution in the context of resolution 1325 (2000) for its pioneering work on gender justice. By recognizing a range of sexual and gender-based crimes experienced by women in conflict, the ICC also acts to deter the commission of such crimes in the future.

Membership in the Security Council is a privilege that entails the responsibility to take action when confronted with mass atrocity crimes in conflict situations. The code of conduct on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, as elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence, Transparency Group, is an expression of the commitment that Council members will take timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending said crimes. The code of conduct is also a pledge not to vote against a credible draft resolution before the Security Council that is aimed at ending or preventing the commission of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. Recent experience in the Council shows that, unfortunately, we are still far from realizing that vision. One hundred and twelve Member States have signed the code, among them a majority of Council members. Those 112 States expect the code to be applied in practice, including on the basis of information provided by the Secretary-General. We therefore encourage the implementation of the code in the Council and call on all the remaining Member States, especially Council members and those aspiring to become members, to join the code of conduct.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First of all, allow me to join previous speakers in expressing our appreciation to Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and His Excellency the Secretary-General for organizing this open debate of the Security Council on conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Today the role of the Security Council is important in discharging the mission of the United Nations, which is to maintain international peace and security. We believe that the Security Council should be directed towards ensuring impartiality and objectivity to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. We cannot but take this opportunity to point out the attitude of the Security Council towards the issue of the Korean peninsula, where an explosive situation prevails. The Korean peninsula faces extremely aggravated tensions. Nobody knows when a nuclear war will break out owing to the manoeuvres of the United States and its followers to stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with unprecedented politico-military and economic isolation and pressure.

Every year the United States has continued to hold large-scale joint military exercises, escalating military threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and bringing into the Korean peninsula all kinds of nuclear strategic assets on the pretext of the exercises. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made a request on several occasions to the Security Council to convene an emergency meeting with regard to the aggressive and provocative large-scale joint military exercises, which are undermining international peace and security. Nevertheless, the Security Council declined our request every time. On the other hand, it takes issue with the righteous self-defence actions being taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to safeguard its sovereignty, dignity and national security.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has no other choice but to arm itself with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the Security Council concluded that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ongoing nuclear and ballistic-related activities are a clear threat to international peace and security, including the so-called resolution 2321 (2016), which was fabricated most recently against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We sent letters to former Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, dated 23 May and 5 December 2016, respectively, questioning if there is any article in international law that stipulates that nuclear tests and satellite and ballistic missile launches constitute a threat to international peace and security as legal grounds for Security Council sanctions resolutions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. However, to our regret, the Secretariat has only mentioned Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations, without a single word in response to our question in the letter dated 20 December 2016 addressed to Mr. Jeffery Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Article 39 of the Charter cannot be legal grounds for sanctions resolutions, as was already discussed in the international law community. In 1966, when former Rhodesia declared independence from the British colonial regime, the Security Council adopted a sanctions resolution invoking the Article 39 as its legal grounds for the first time in the history of the United Nations. In thit regard, the international law community asserted that a declaration of independence is not a threat to the peace or a breach of the peace and labelled the adoption of the sanctions resolution as an act of abuse of power. Even the writers of the Charter of the United Nations clarified that they had drafted Article 39 referring to an act of aggression, not to be invoked for sanctions during times of peace.

The hydrogen bomb test, nuclear warhead test and the test firing of various strikes, which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted, including the preparation for intercontinental ballistic missiles and other rocket launches, are fully in line with the exercise of the legitimate right tipulated in the Charter of the United Nations as a self-defence measure for deterrence in case of encroachment upon our sovereignty and the right to survival by hostile forces.

As long as the United States and its followers continue their nuclear threats and blackmail, and as long as they do not stop their war games at our doorstep, disguising them as annual events, our self-defence capability and our capability for pre-emptive strikes with nuclear armed forces as their pivot will be bolstered significantly.

Finally, I hope that the Security Council will discharge its responsibility to the international community by strictly observing impartiality objectively to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President: It is my understanding that two delegations have requested the floor to make further statements. It is my intention to accede to those requests. However, I would ask each delegation to limit itself to one additional statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Arcia Vivas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is grateful to the Swedish presidency for organizing this constructive debate and the conclusions it has brought about for the strengthening of international peace and security. Nonetheless, our delegation regrets the fact that we have to take the floor once again to underscore that, unfortunately, during this debate on conflict prevention and sustainable peace, the delegation of Morocco, in violation of the methodology and practice of these debates, dedicated paragraphs of its statement to slander our country and spread untruths and misinformation by referring to the internal situation in Venezuela and our principled position during our membership in the Security Council.

Those unacceptable allusions are motivated by the fact that our country has presented before the Security Council the undeniable facts of a topic that affects international peace and security and which is on the Council's agenda and is the cause of resolutions and debates in the General Assembly and in its subsidiary committee — the Special Committee on Decolonization — the question of the Western Sahara, an issue has been awaiting for a political, definitive, lasting and mutually acceptable solution for more than 20 years.

This unjustified attack is regrettable, but not unusual, because it is part of the repeated strategy of insults and attacks by the delegation of Morocco in any authoritative United Nations body that tries to fulfil the mandates of the Security Council and the General Assembly with regard to the situation in Western Sahara, which is the case with the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization, the attacks on former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the unilateral expulsion of the civilian staff of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

It is important to point out that Venezuela presented in its statement today undeniable facts, such as Morocco's occupation of Sahraoui territory in Western Sahara, that country's ignoring of United Nations resolutions and its failure to hold the self-determination referendum, which should have taken place 25 years ago. However, instead of making an argument, the Moroccan delegation adopted a rude and aggressive attitude, which is far removed from how it should conduct itself in the diplomatic sphere and which we condemn.

We regret these attitudes, which do not intimidate us, nor do they undermine the Venezuela's position that we should respect the principles that govern the Organization, or our commitment to the cause of decolonization.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Laassel (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I regret the fact that Morocco must take the floor once again at this late hour to respond to Venezuela.

Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations, to which all of us at the United Nations have subscribed, confers upon the members of the Security Council the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In that capacity they act on behalf of the Members of the United Nations. Unfortunately, a country that has been a member of the Council and that cannot purport to maintain peace and security for the simple reason that it is a country with only one agenda, never spoke of the great difficulties concerning its own crisis. He focused on my country. I find myself in a situation in which I have the obligation to respond to what he has just said.

The people in our southern provinces are living in peace and calm. That is not the case with regard to the people of Venezuela, who must leave their country to find food to eat and bury their children because they do not have medicine.

I will conclude my statement by saying that a country that kills its own judges cannot represent the international community and act in the name of promoting peace and security in the world.

The meeting rose at 8.10 p.m.